Tree of Life

by

Kirsten E.Volness

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Musical Arts
(Music: Composition)
in the University of Michigan
2008

Doctoral Committee:

Associate Professor Evan K. Chambers, Chair
Professor Michael K. Daugherty
Associate Professor Erik Ros Santos
Assistant Professor Kevin Gray Carr
Assistant Professor Charles Hiroshi Garrett

Tree of Life

for string quartet and stereo digital sound

I. White Birch
II. Weeping Willow
III. Coast Redwood

Performance Notes:
All trills oscillate between written pitch and adjacent note above as designated by key signature unless otherwise stated.

Accidentals carry through to the end of the measure in which they appear.

In free tempo section, ensemble should be cued by appropriate player to execute beats marked by dashed vertical lines together.

In performance, electronic sounds are triggered at numbered cue with an accompanying MAX/MSP playback module.

In electronic part, crescendos begin and decrescendos end in silence (niente) unless otherwise noted. Pitches and rhythms notated coincide with full realization of sound; sometimes they are preceded by a crescendo to show that the sound fades in to its full realization.

Timings are given in parentheses to facilitate rehearsal with continuous CD playback.

Program Note:
The Tree of Life appears in numerous cultures throughout history and it represents the interconnectedness of everything on Earth and in the spirit world, above and below. In the Japanese Shinto tradition, natural features such as waterfalls, mountains, and so on, are believed to house *kami*, or spirits, who bring blessings or mischief to the human realm. I chose to integrate these ideas by exploring, as I imagine them, the spirit presences of my favorite types of trees and to consider what they might bring to share in the larger fabric of life, death, the world we can see, and the worlds we may not yet have experienced.

Duration: 16 minutes.

DEDICATION

Commissioned by the BMI Foundation, Inc.
to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Colorado Quartet
and the 30th anniversary of Symphony Space.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For sharing their talent in producing excellent source audio samples, special thanks to
Jacob Richman, wind chimes and water
Abigail Albaugh, violin
Joshua Bornfield, guitar

For providing helpful guidance, knowledge, and continual support, I would like to thank Evan Chambers, the members of my doctoral committee, and the myriad of teachers who have contributed greatly to my life, educationally and otherwise.

For literally everything, a very special thanks to my dear family and friends.

CONTENTS

Dedication……...ii
Acknowledgements……iii
Movements
I. White Birch……...……....1
Interlude…….26
II. Weeping Willow……...……. 33
Interlude…….48
III. Coast Redwood……61

for the Colorado Quartet

Tree of Life

I. White Birch

Kirsten Volness

1

Quiet and ethereal

♩=60

Violin I

con sordino, sul tasto

*tr

n sempre

Violin II

con sordino, sul tasto

*tr

n sempre n

Viola

con sordino, sul tasto

*tr

n sempre n

Violoncello

con sordino, sul tasto

*tr

n sempre n

*Trills are atmospheric; the rhythm need not be executed exactly, but entrances and releases should maintain approximate relationship to electronic part.

1

Quiet and ethereal

♩=60

Wind Chimes

Electronics

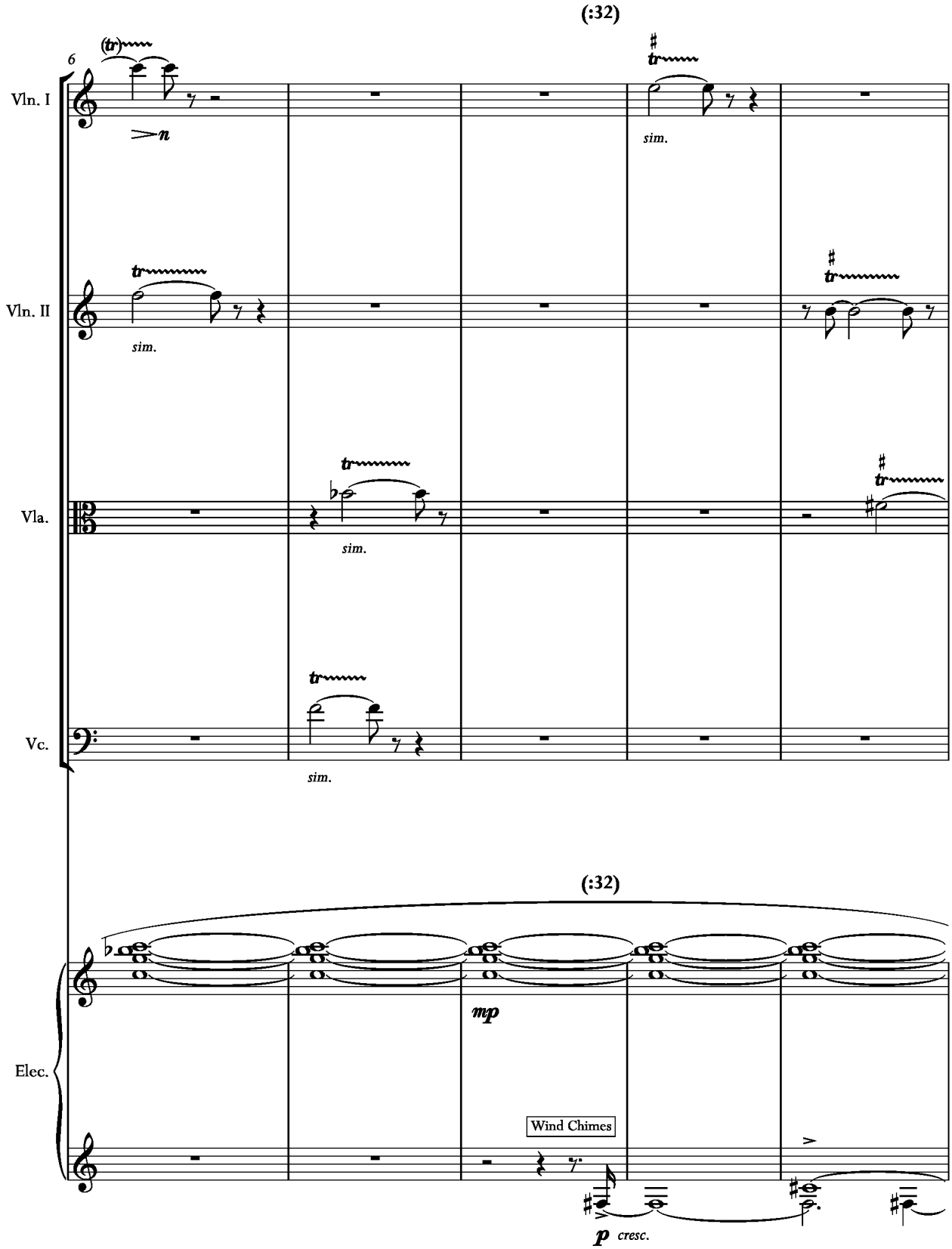
pp

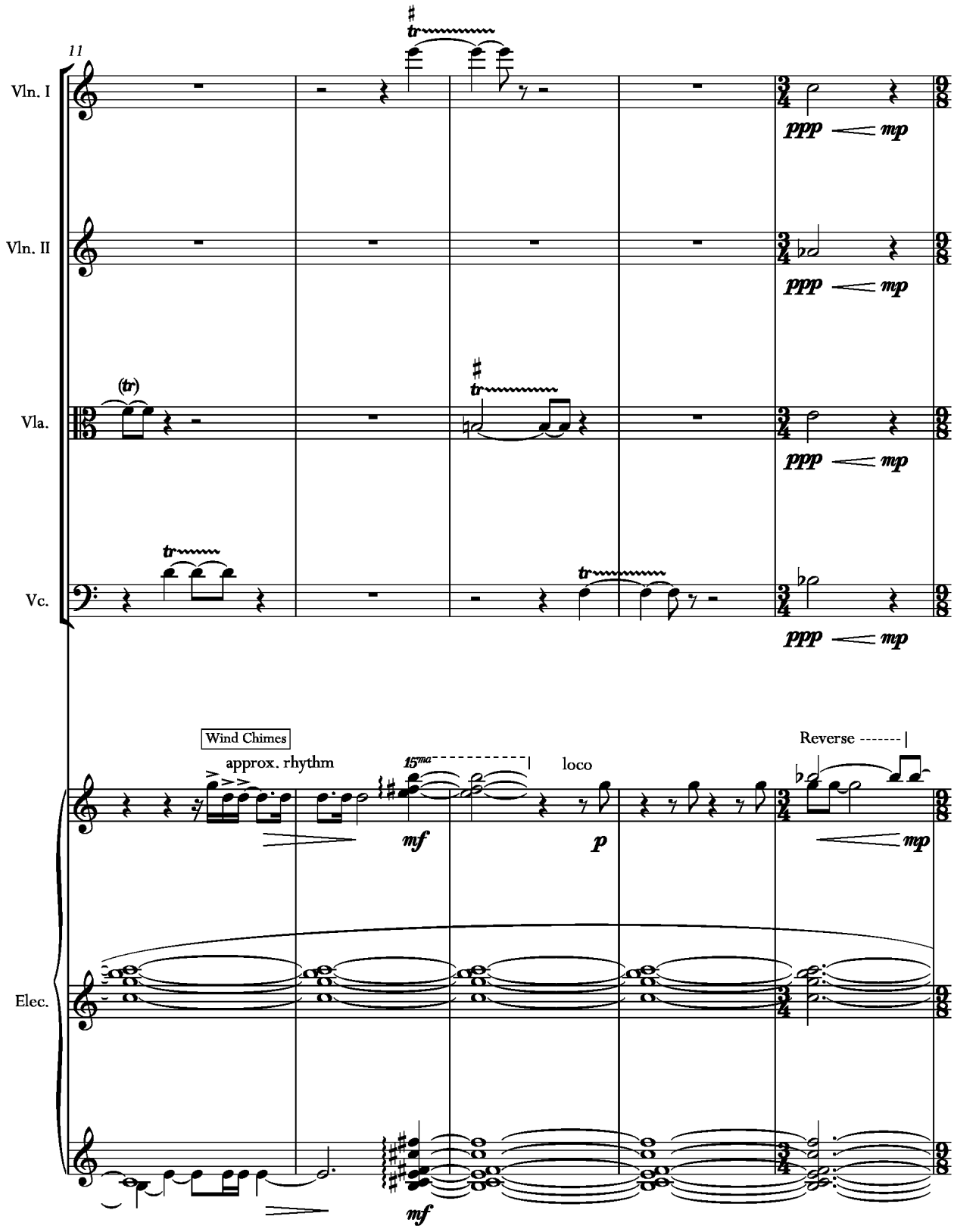
*

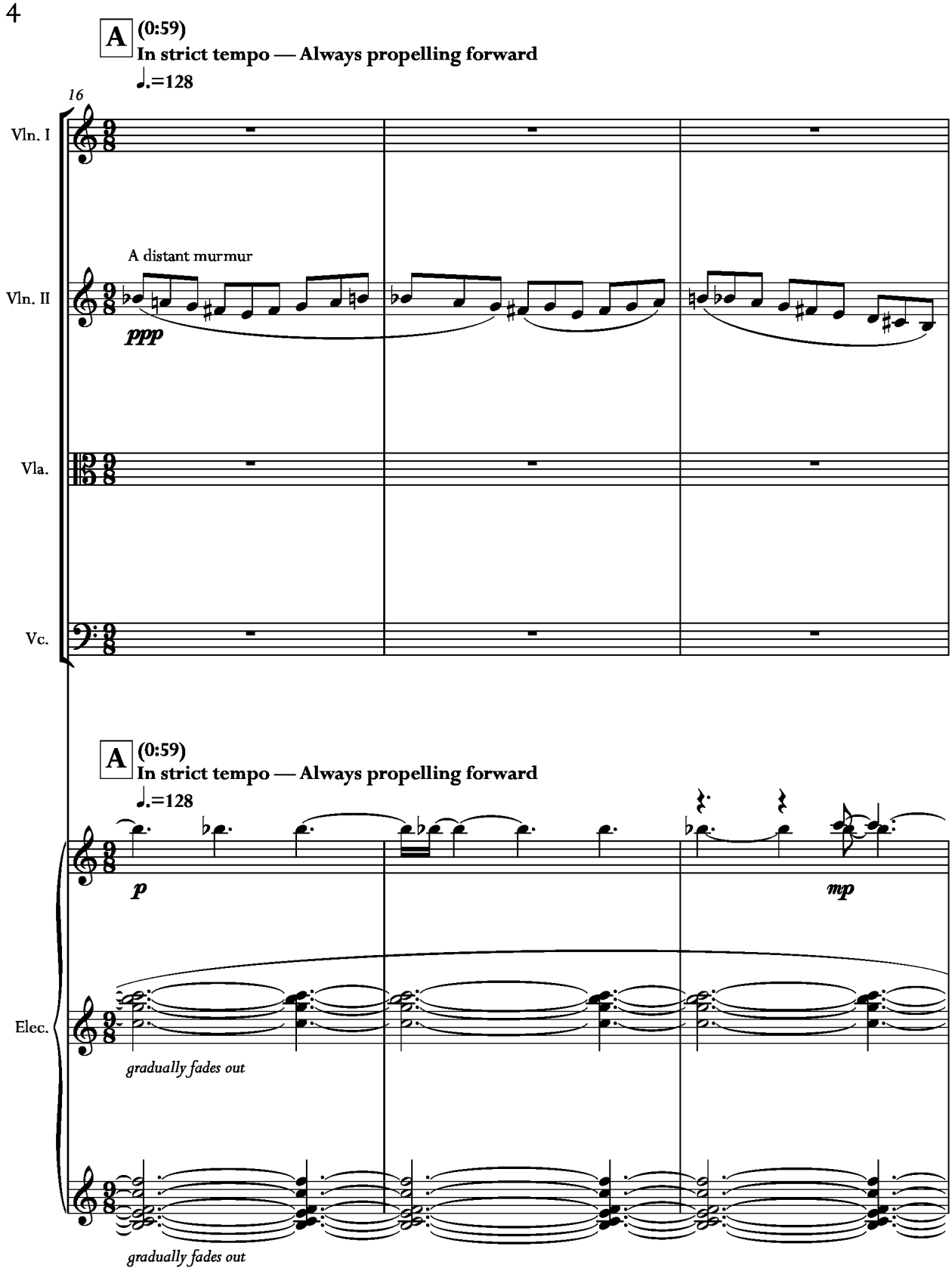
3

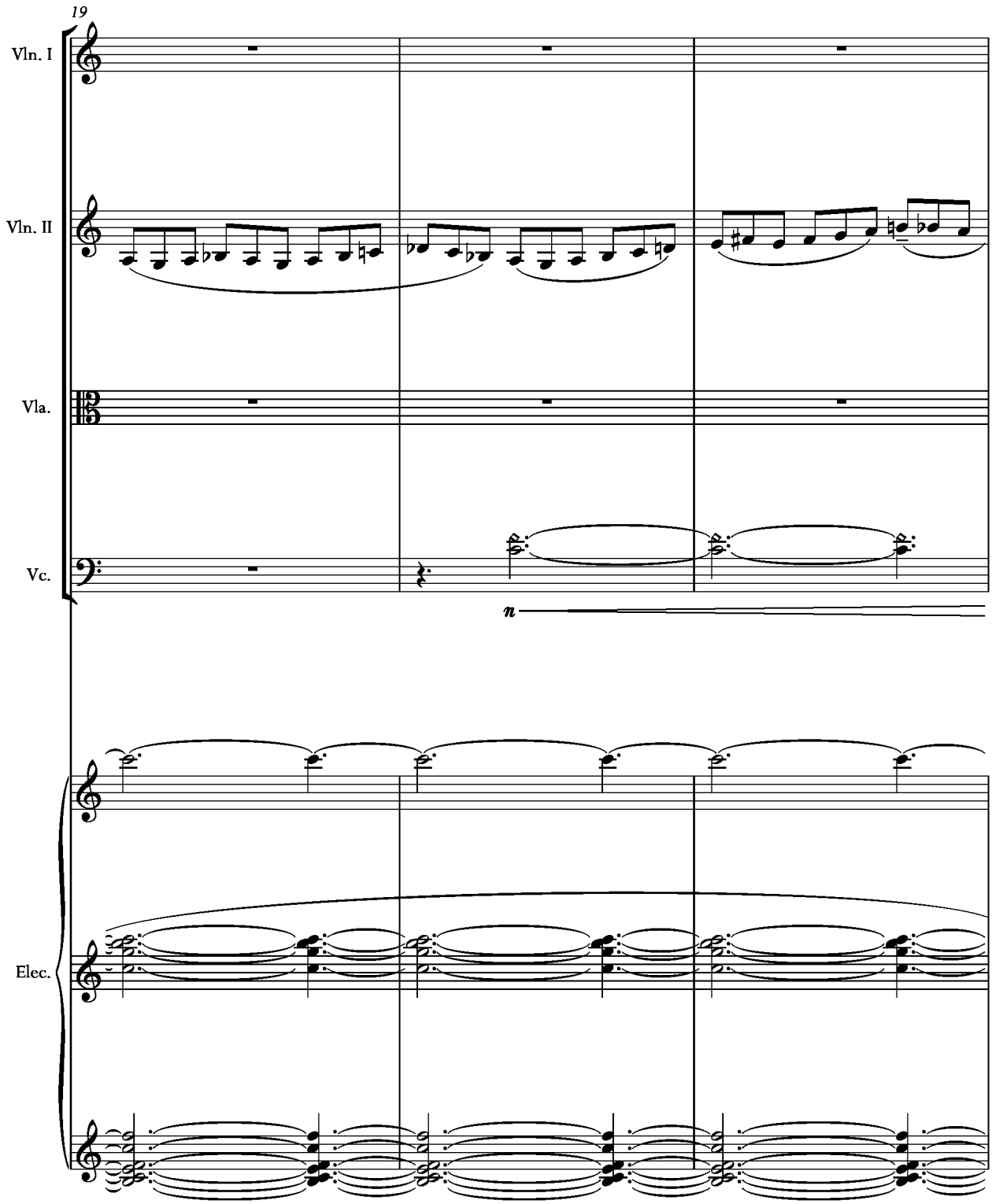
p cresc.

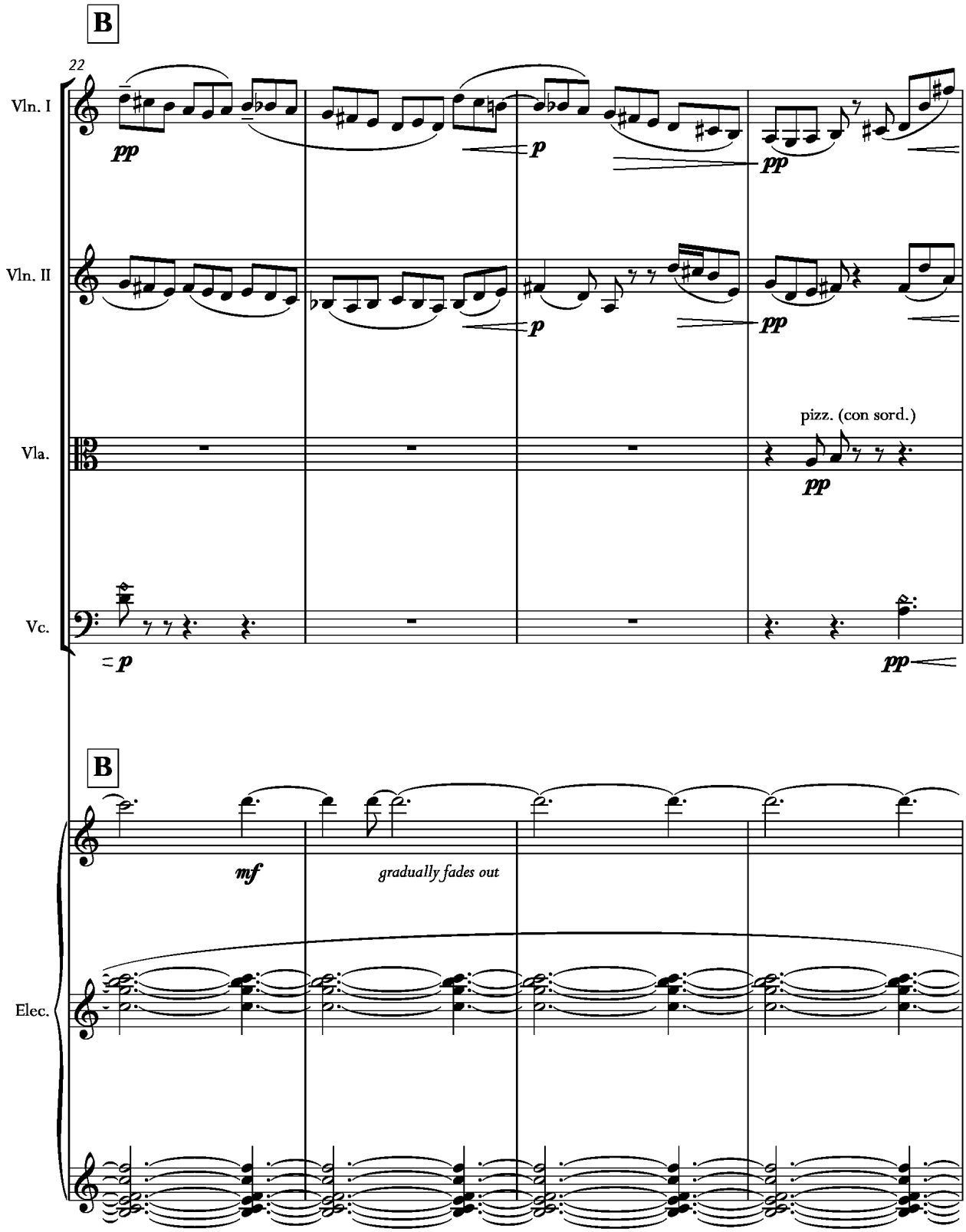
*pitches ring through, similar pattern continues in free rhythm

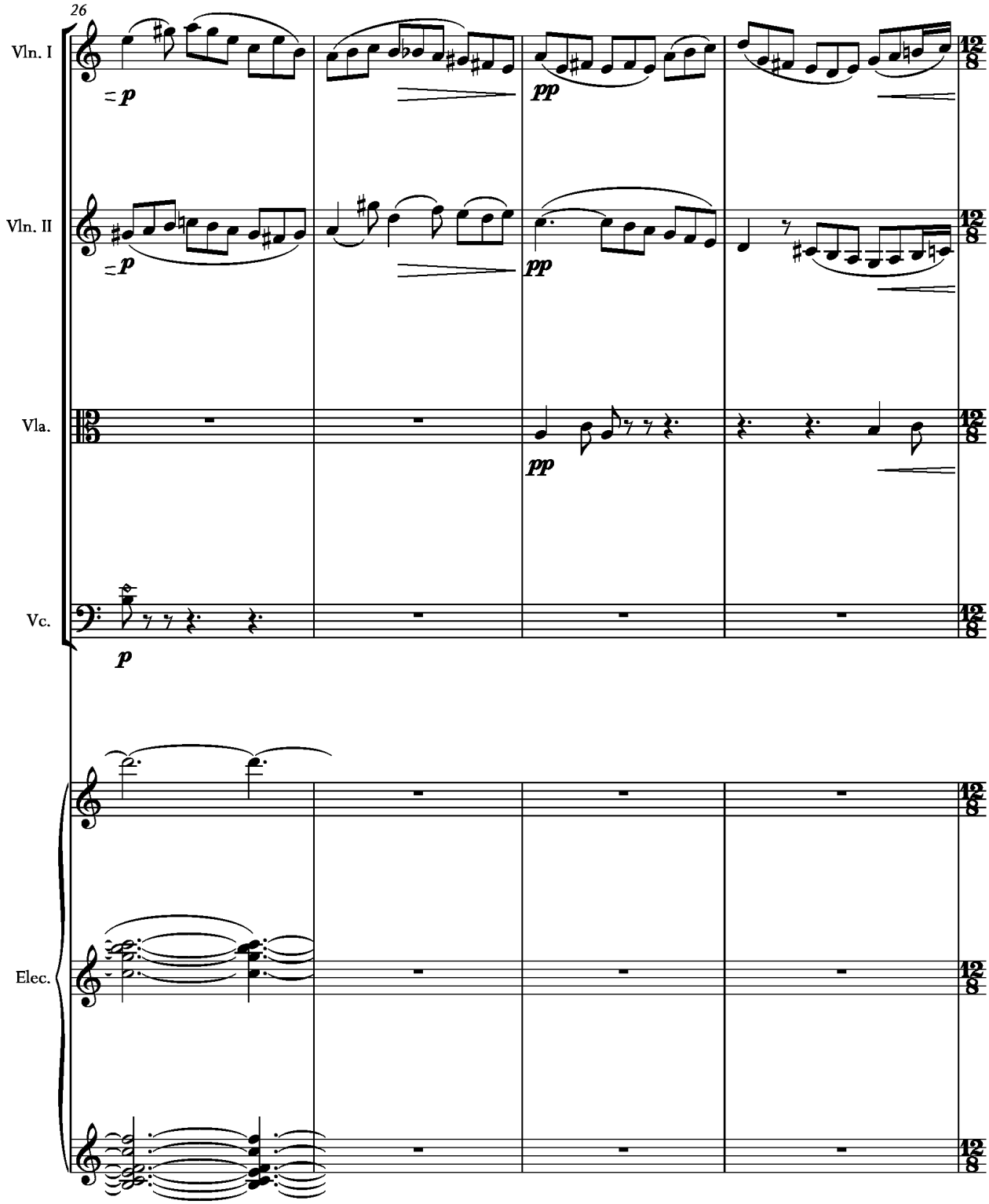

(:32)
6
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Elec.
sim.
(:32)
mp
Wind Chimes
p cresc.


11
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Elec.
ppp
mp
Wind Chimes
approx. rhythm
15ma
loco
Reverse
mf
p

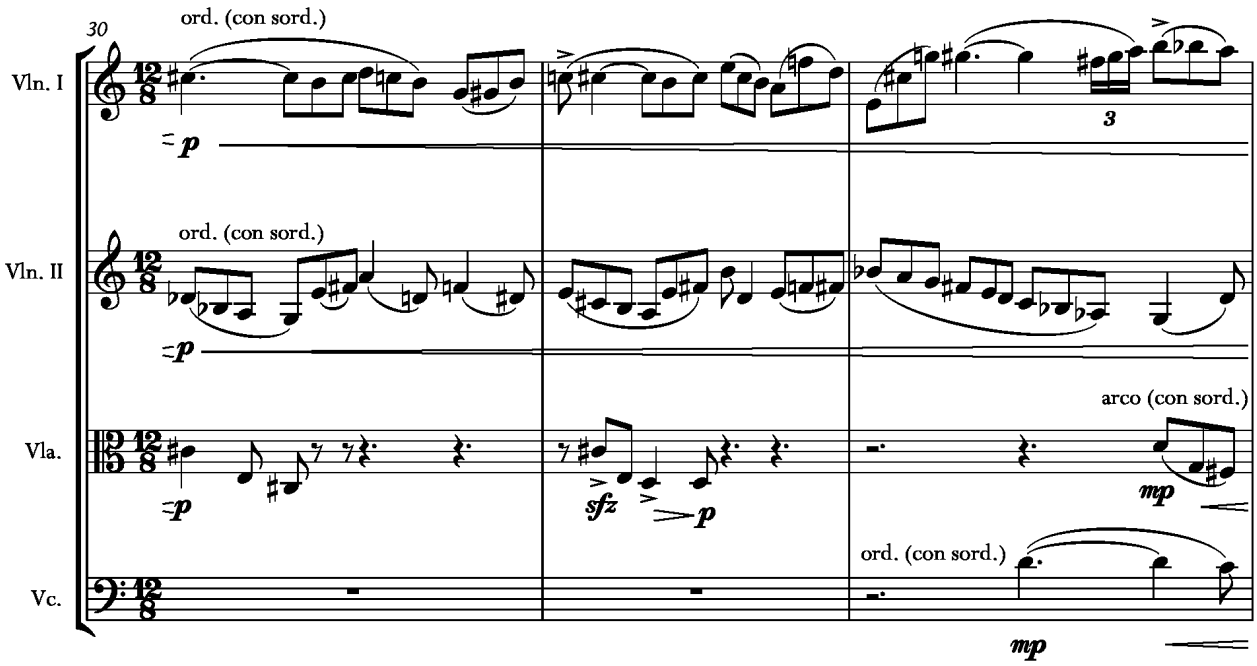

A
(0:59)
In strict tempo — Always propelling forward
♩.=128
16
Vln. I
Vln. II
A distant murmur
ppp
Vla.
Vc.
A
(0:59)
In strict tempo — Always propelling forward
♩.=128
p
mp
Elec.
gradually fades out
gradually fades out


19
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
n
Elec.

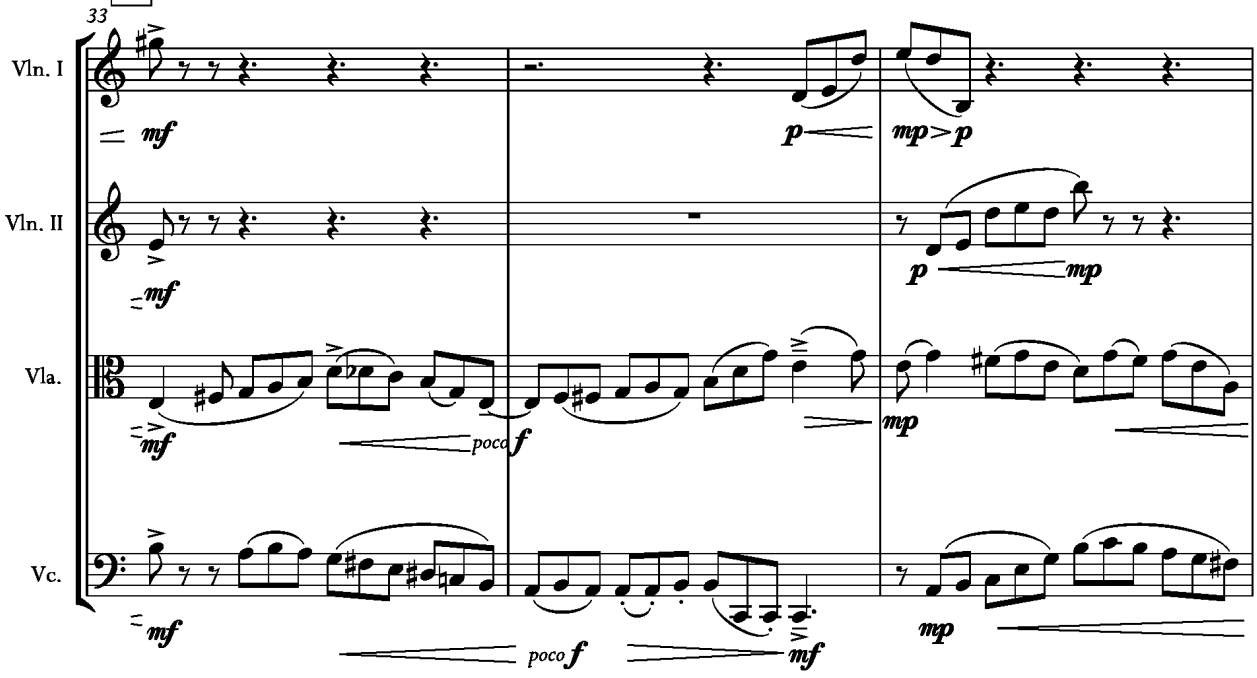

B
22
Vln. I
pp
p
pp
Vln. II
p
pp
pizz. (con sord.)
Vla.
pp
Vc.
p
pp
B
mf
gradually fades out
Elec.

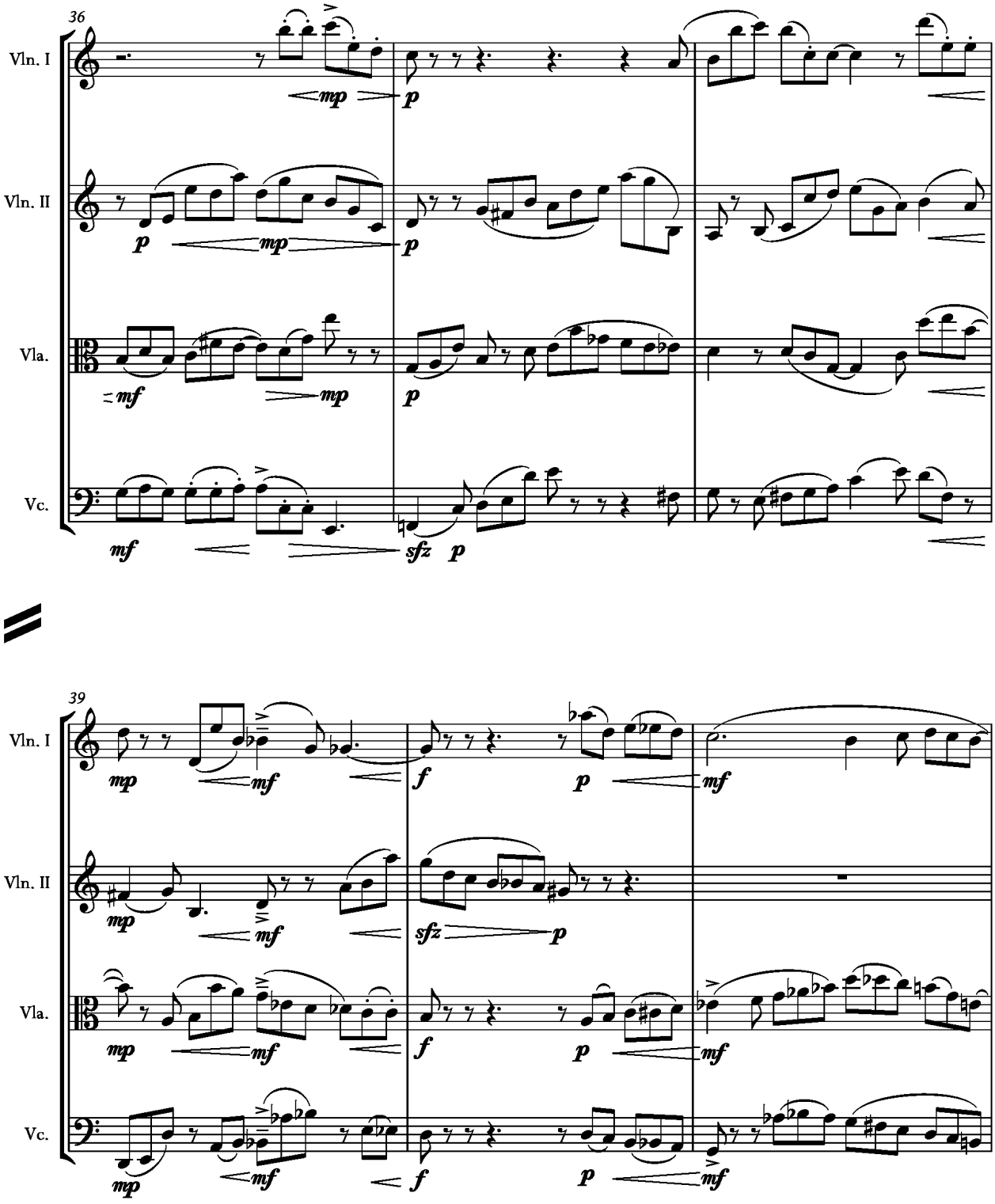

26
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Elec.
p
pp
12/8

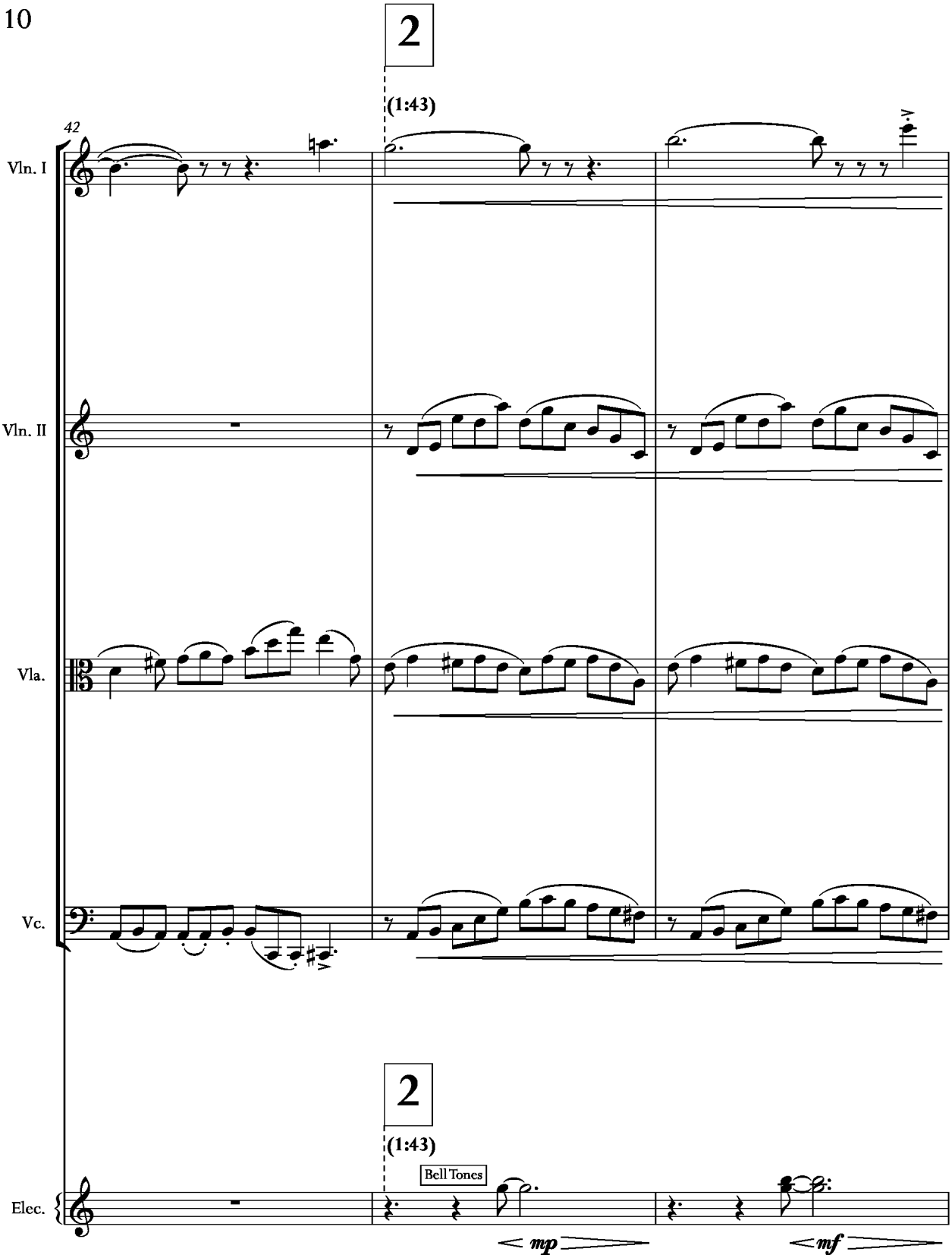
With increasing urgency

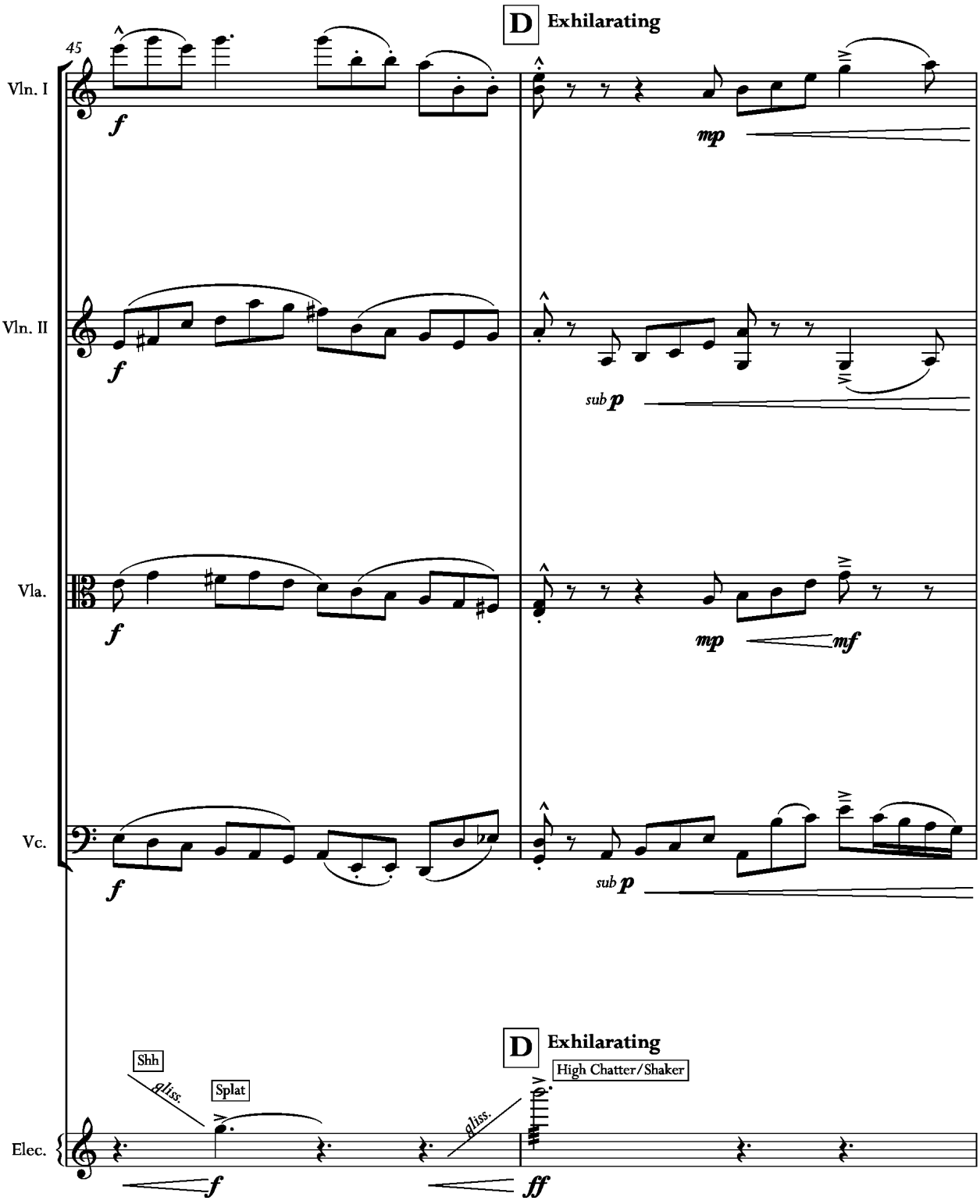


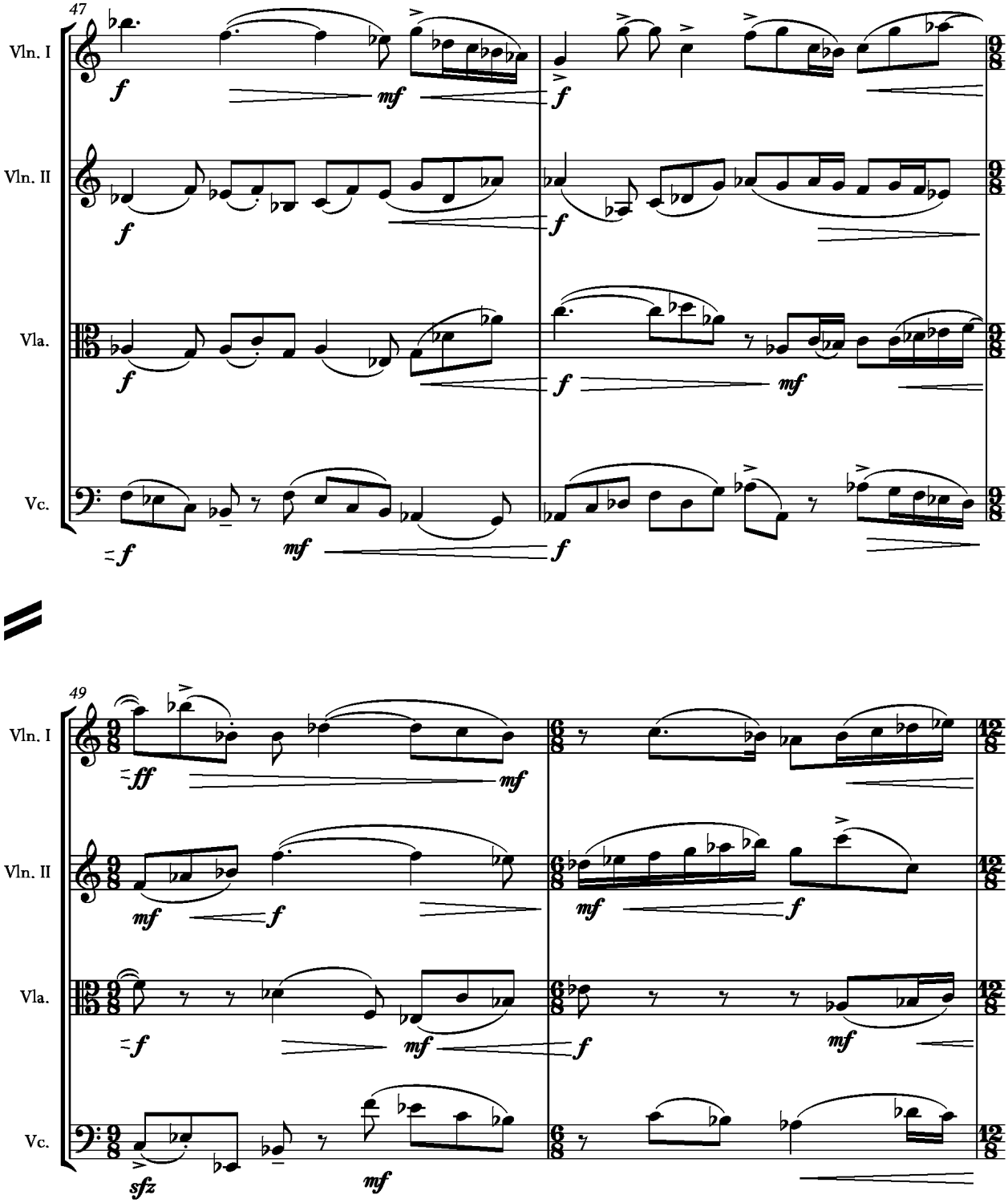
C **Poco Pesante**

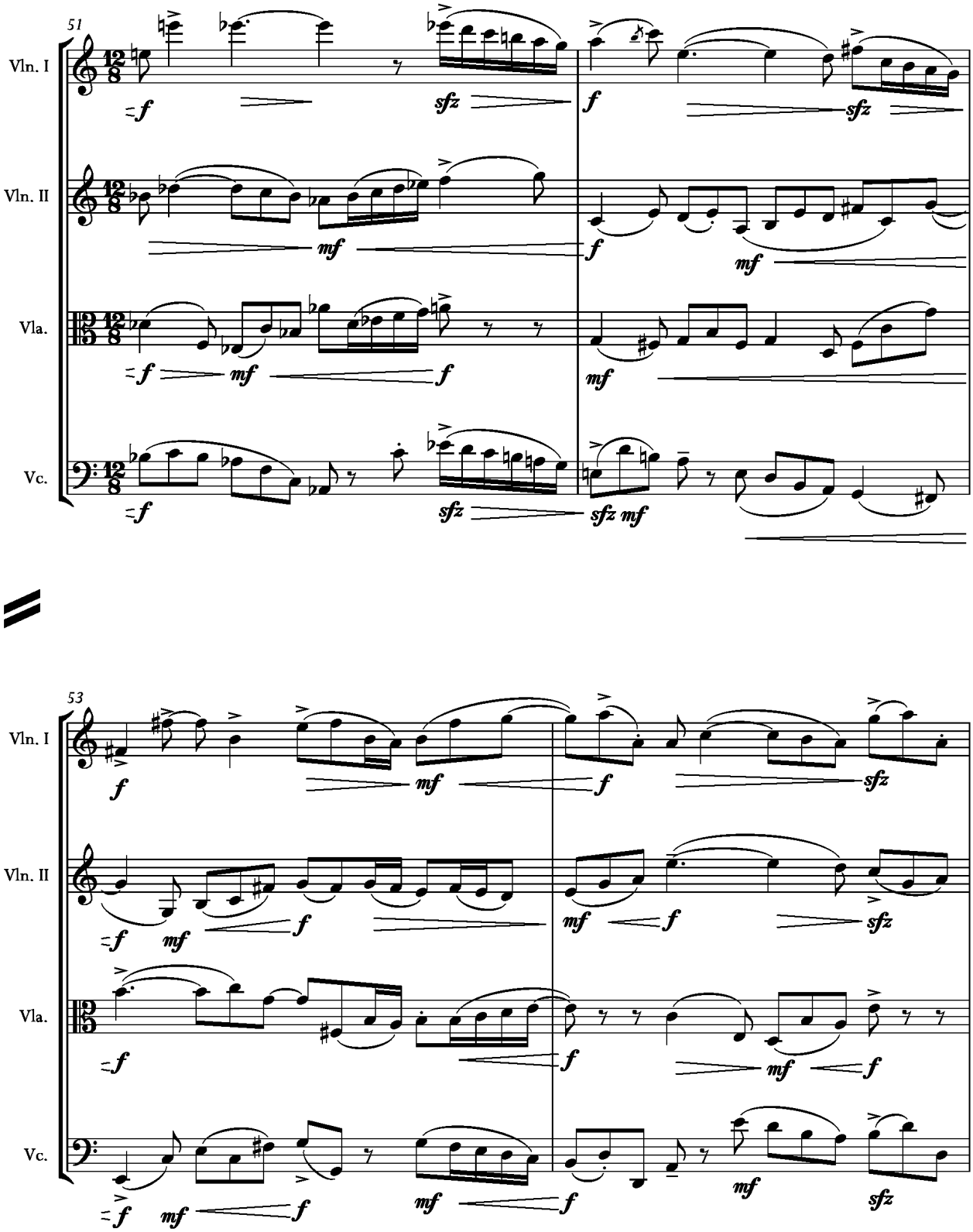


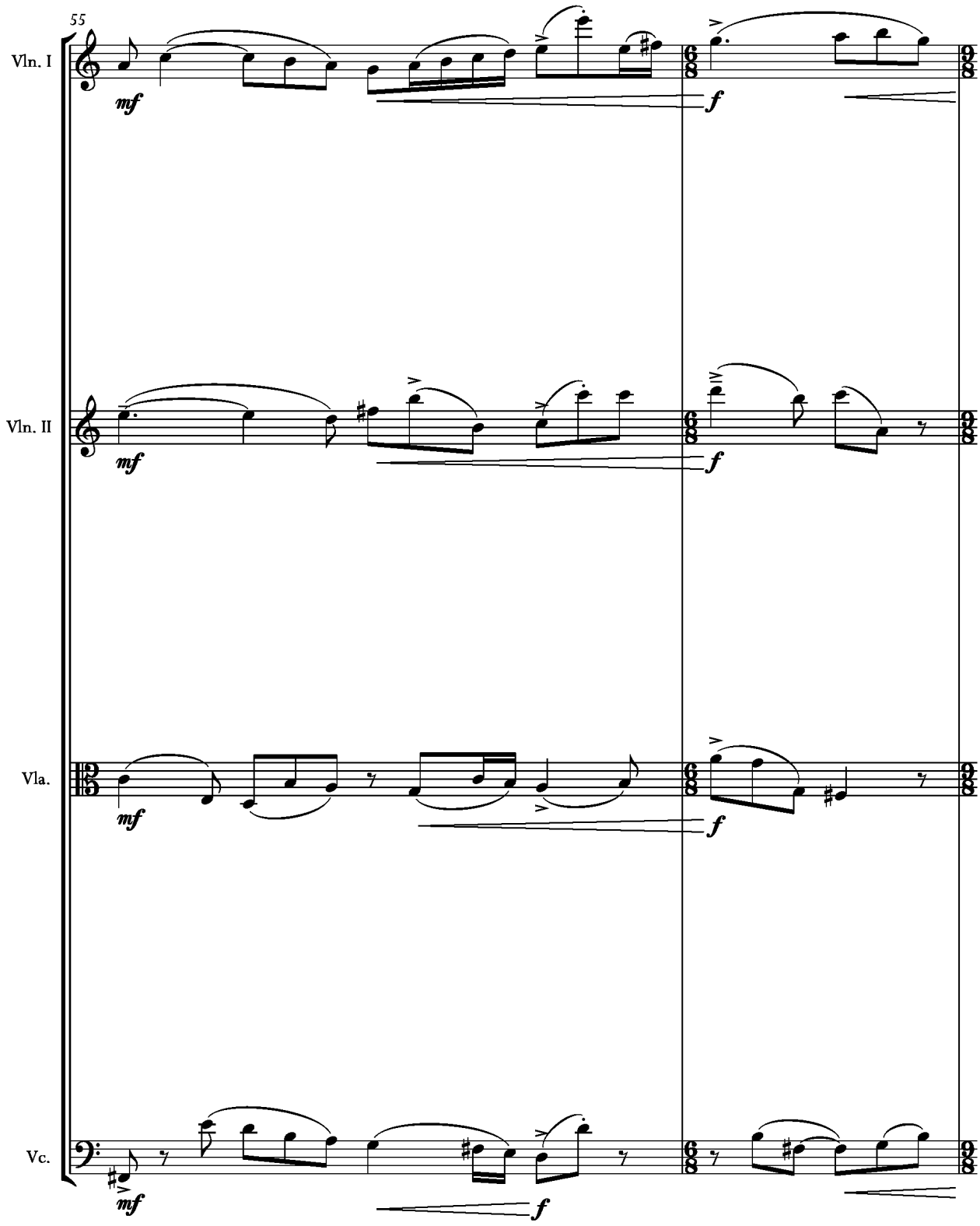

36
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
39
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

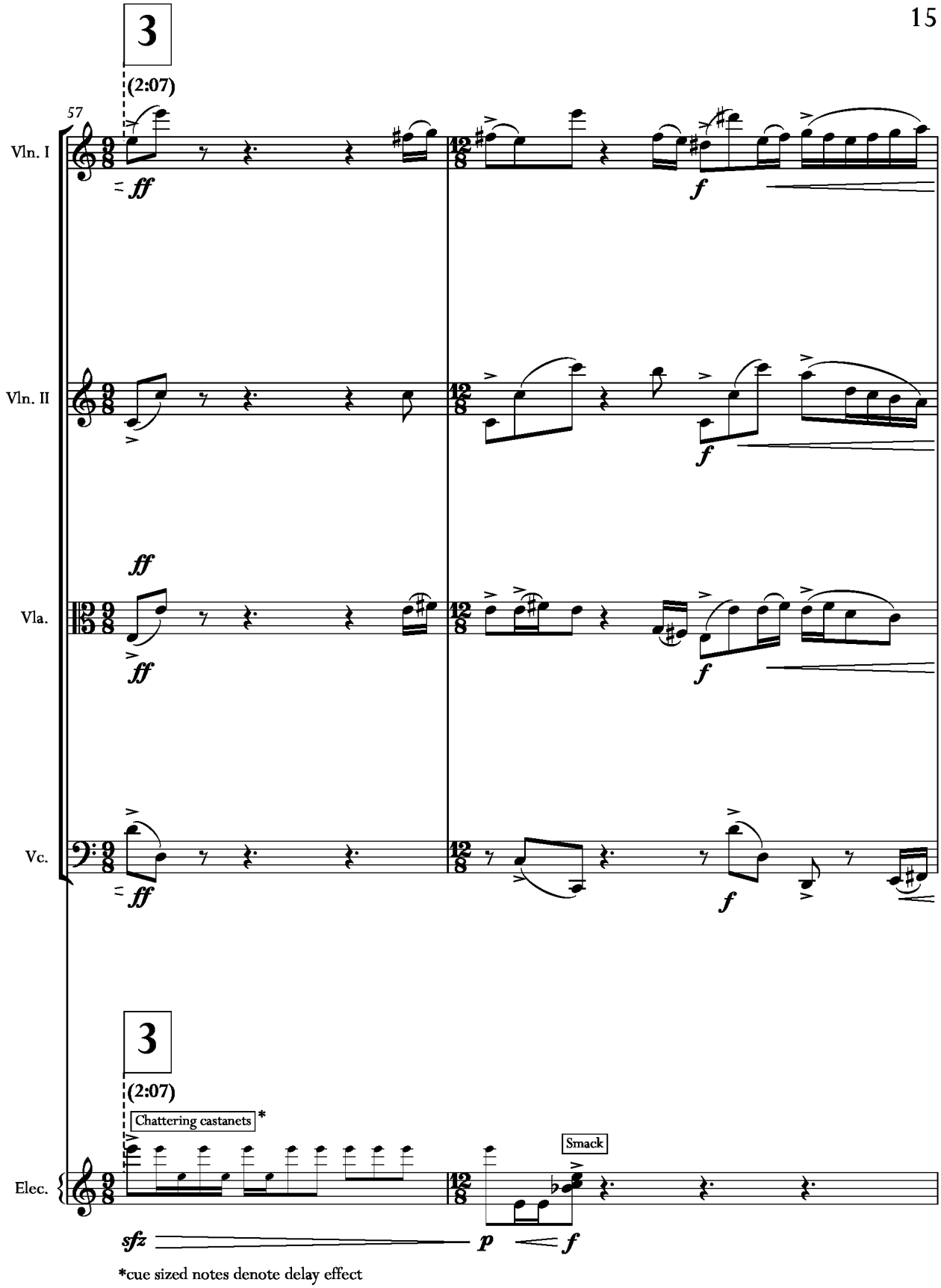

2
(1:43)
42
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
2
(1:43)
Bell Tones
Elec.
mp
mf


D Exhilarating
45
Vln. I
f
mp
IV
Vln. II
f
sub p
VI
Vla.
f
mp
mf
IV
Vc.
f
sub p
IV
D Exhilarating
Elec.
Shh
gliss.
Splat
gliss.
High Chatter/Shaker
f
ff

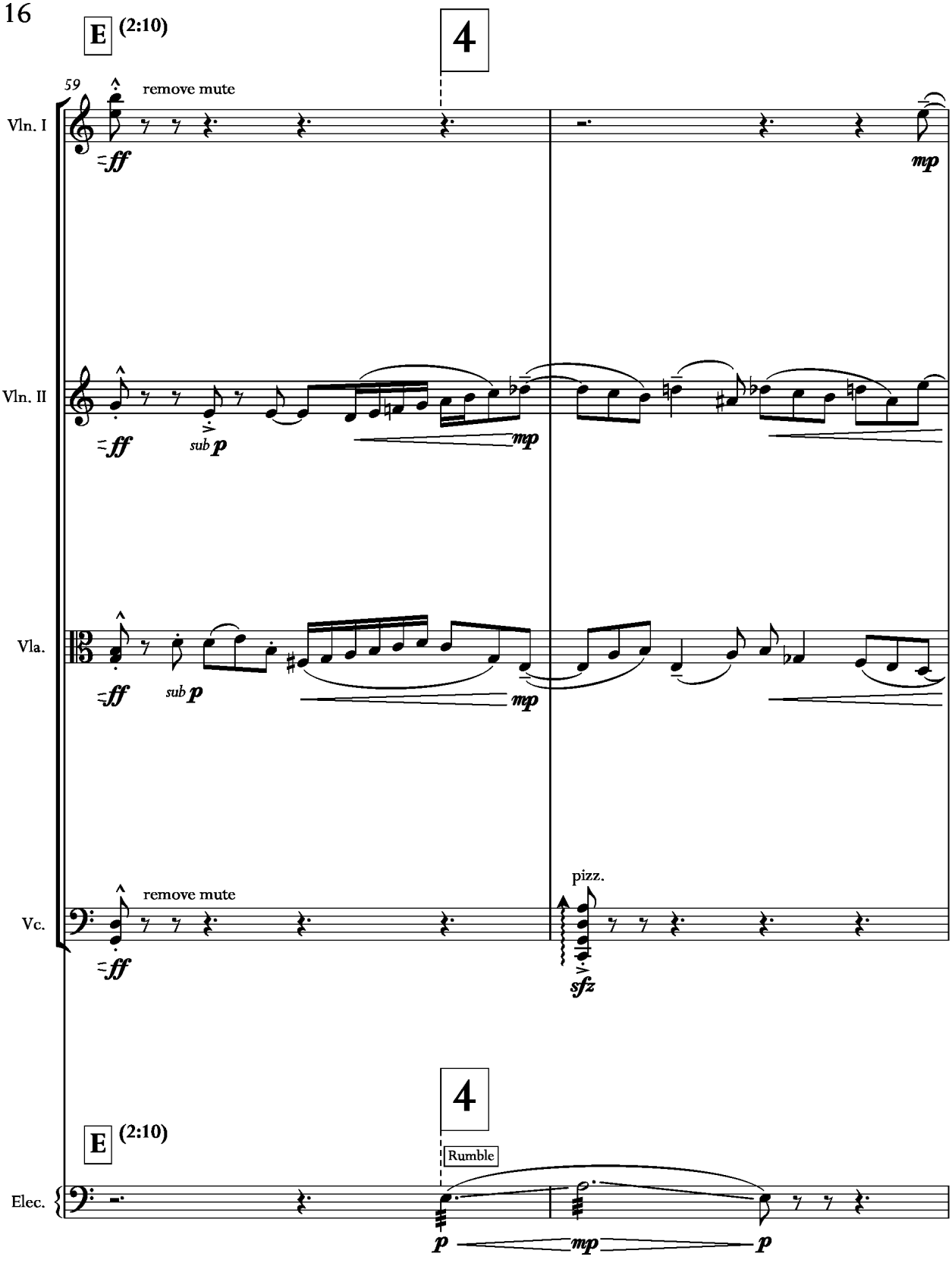

47
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
49
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

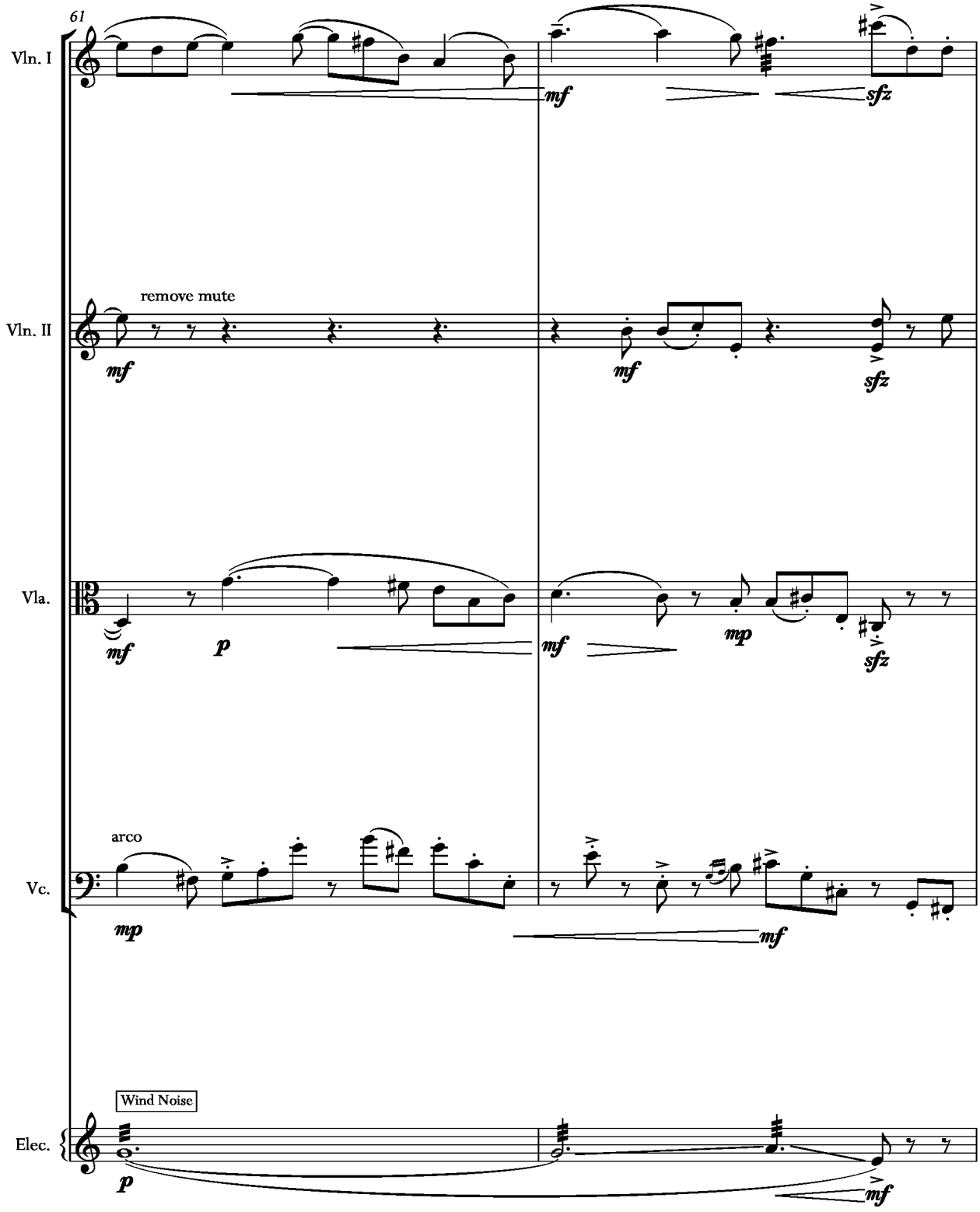

51
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
53
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.

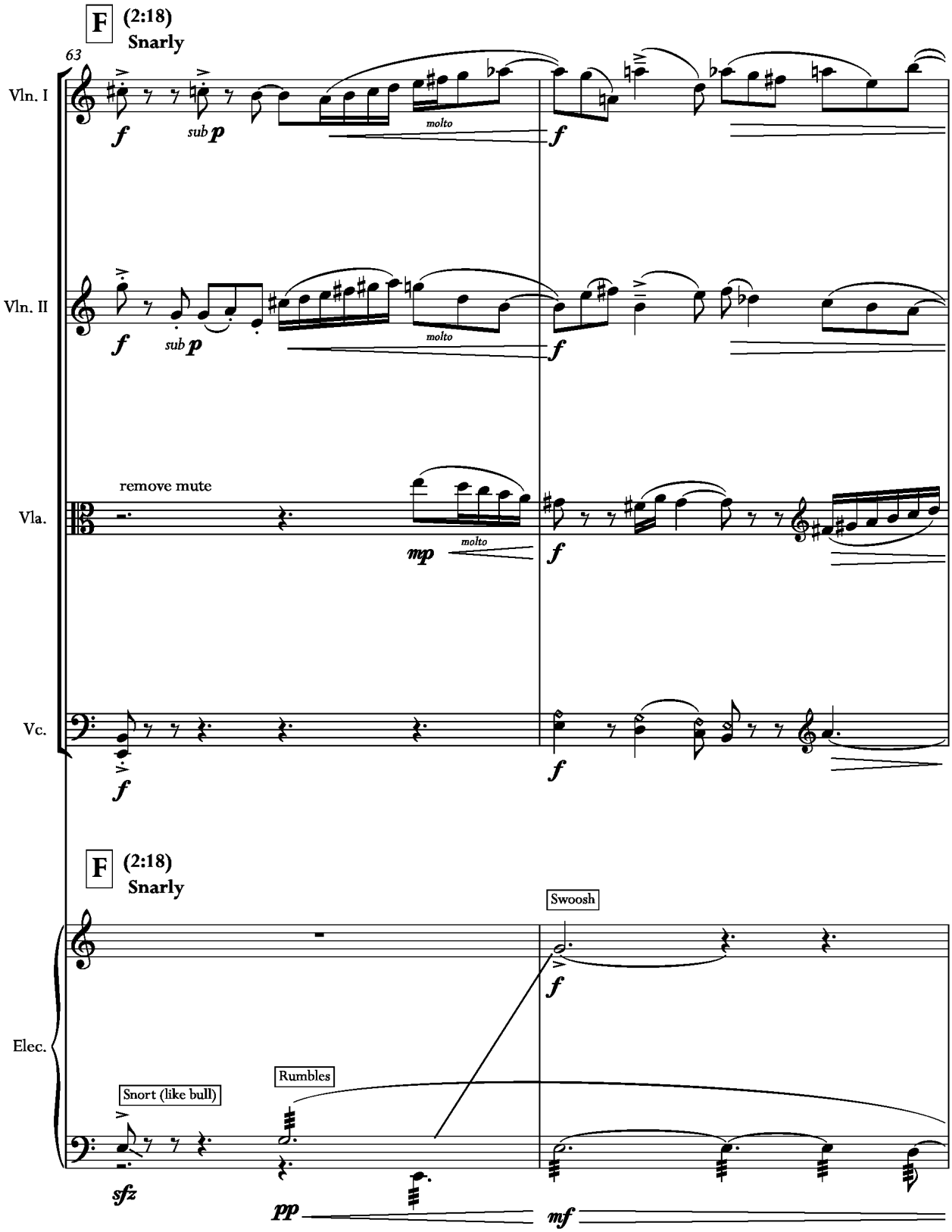

55
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
mf
f

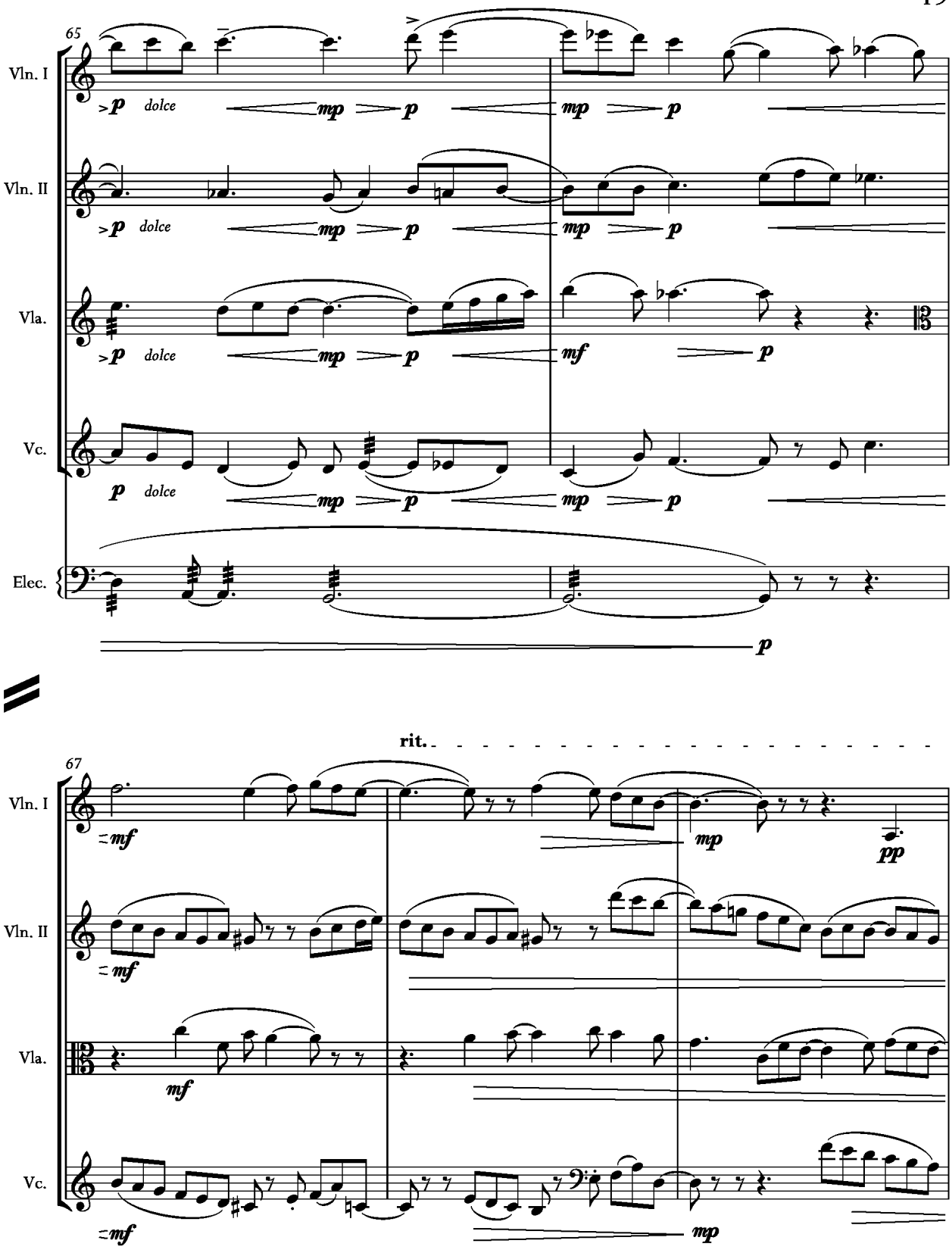


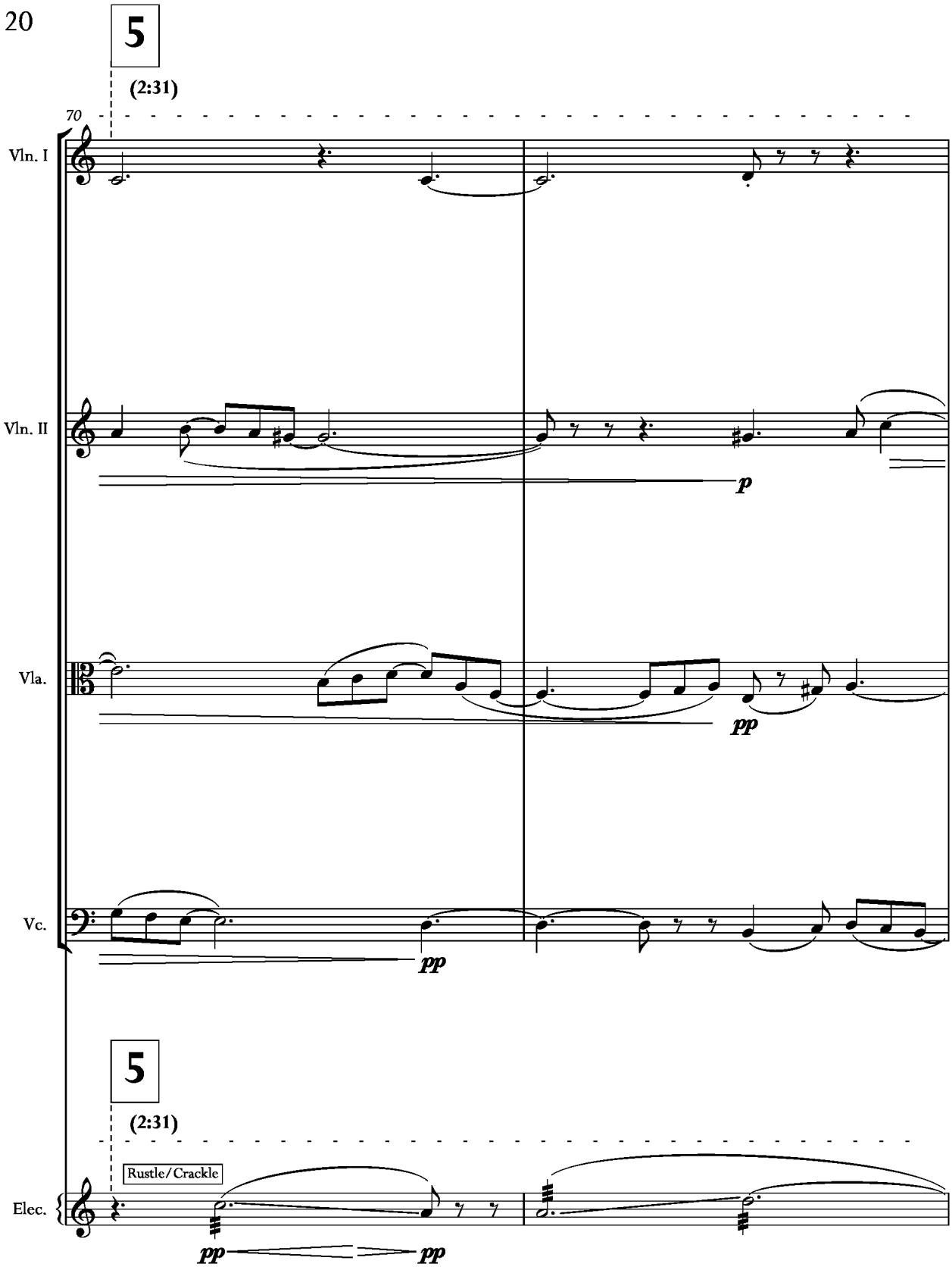
*cue sized notes denote delay effect

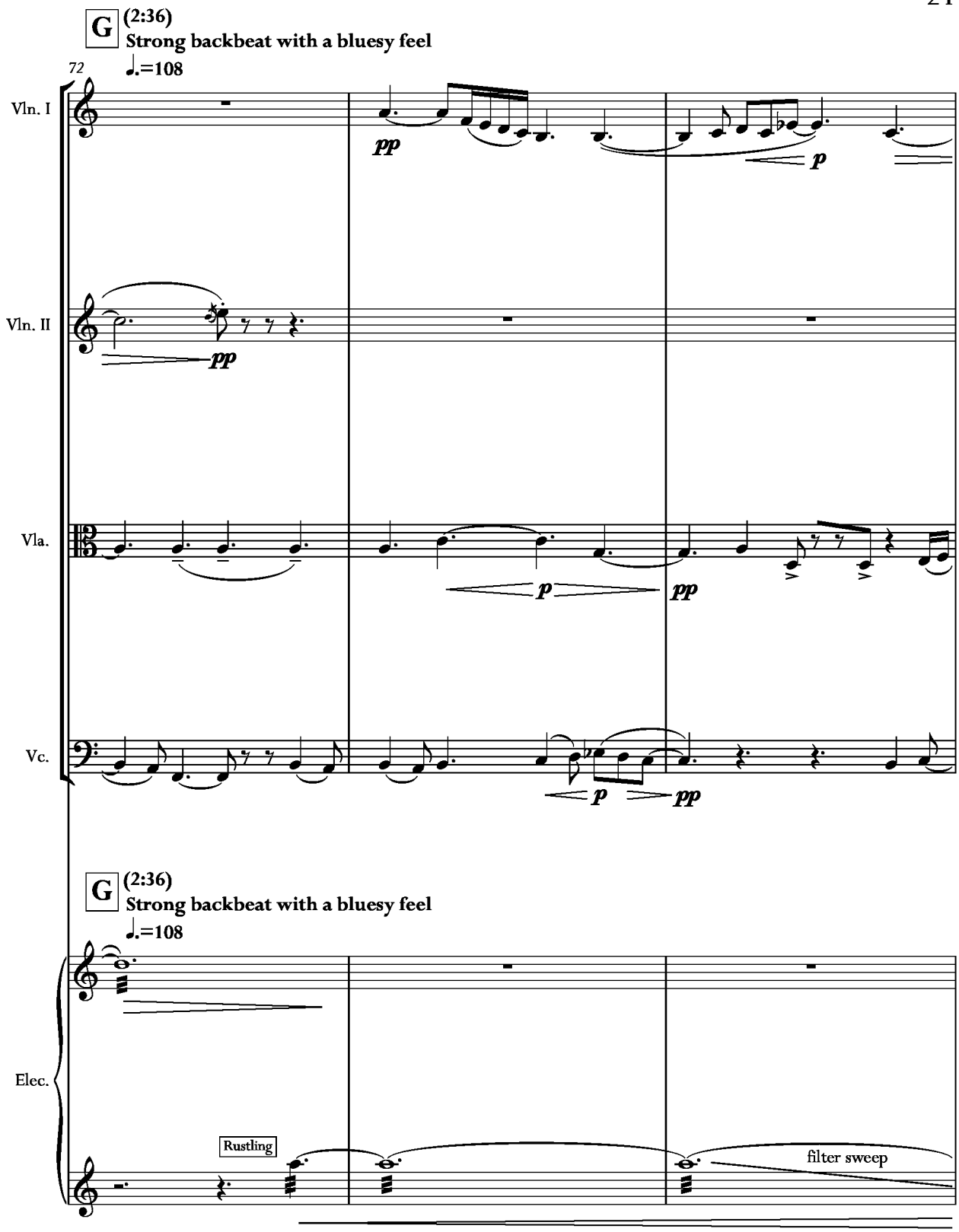

E (2:10)
4
59
remove mute
Vln. I
ff
mp
Vln. II
ff
sub p
mp
Vla.
ff
sub p
mp
Vc.
remove mute
ff
pizz.
sfz
E (2:10)
4
Rumble
Elec.
p
mp
p

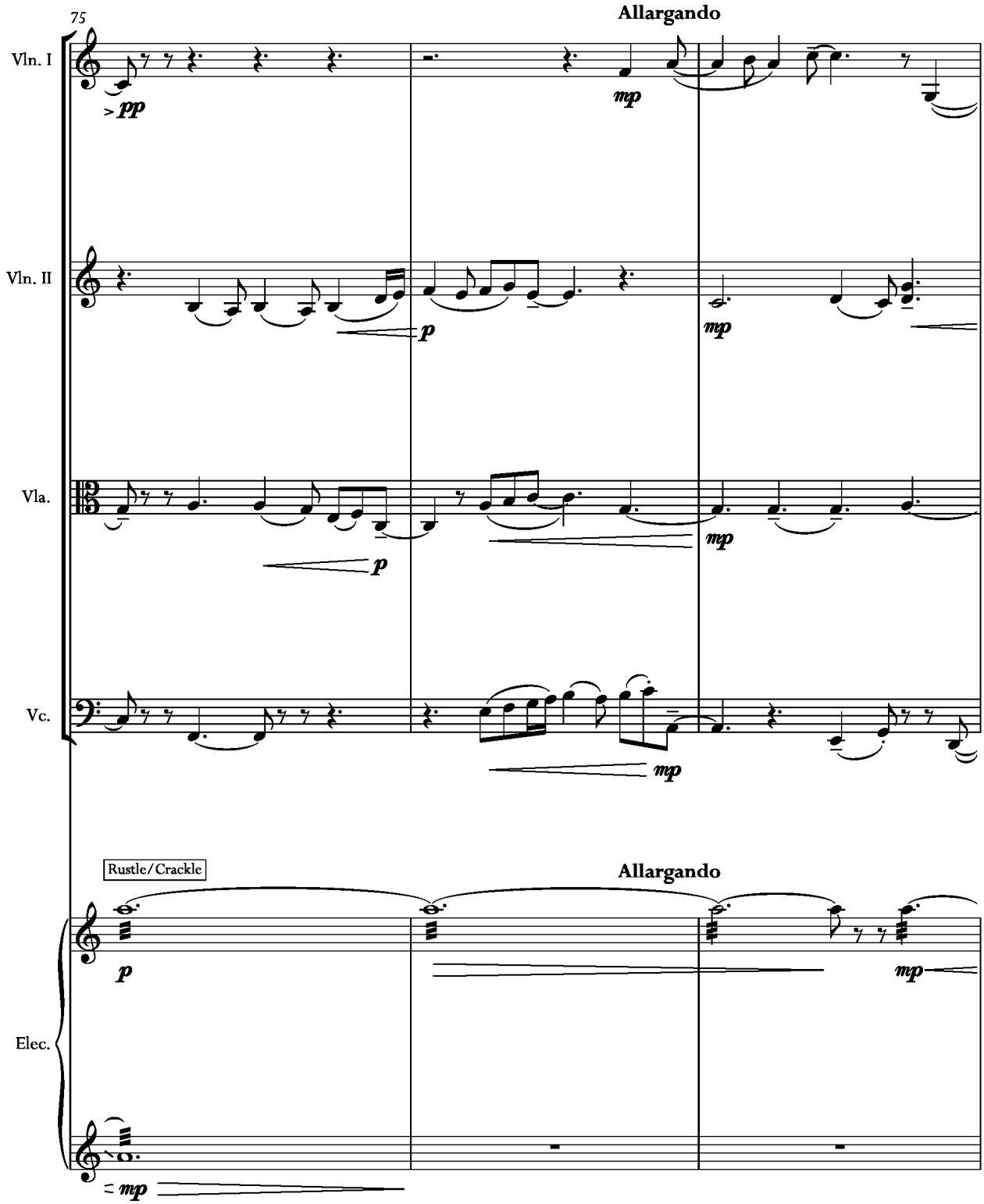

61
Vln. I
mf
sfz
remove mute
Vln. II
mf
mf
sfz
Vla.
mf
p
mf
mp
sfz
arco
Vc.
mp
mf
Wind Noise
Elec.
p
mf

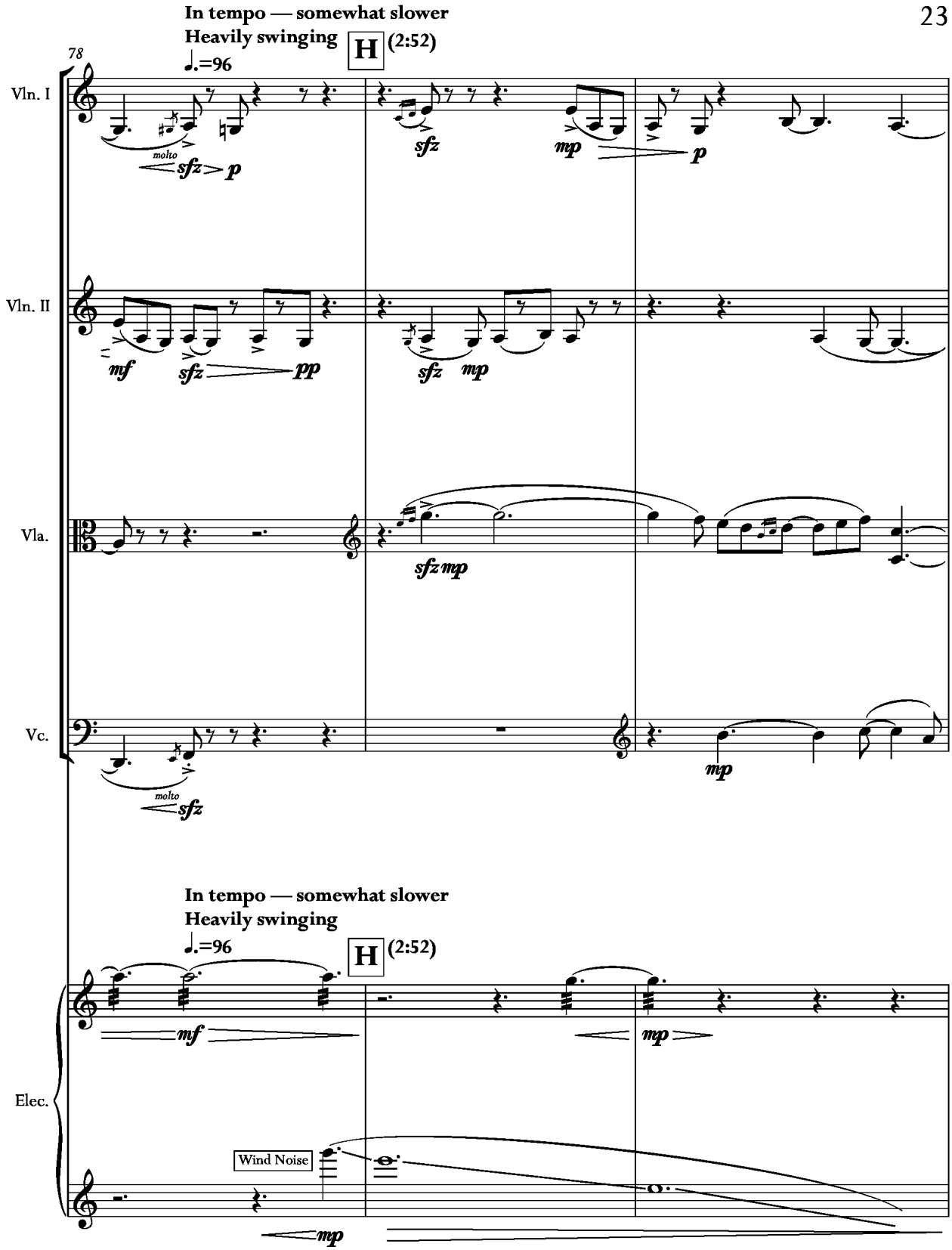

F
(2:18)
Snarly
63
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Elec.
remove mute
molto
sub p
Swoosh
Rumbles
Snort (like bull)

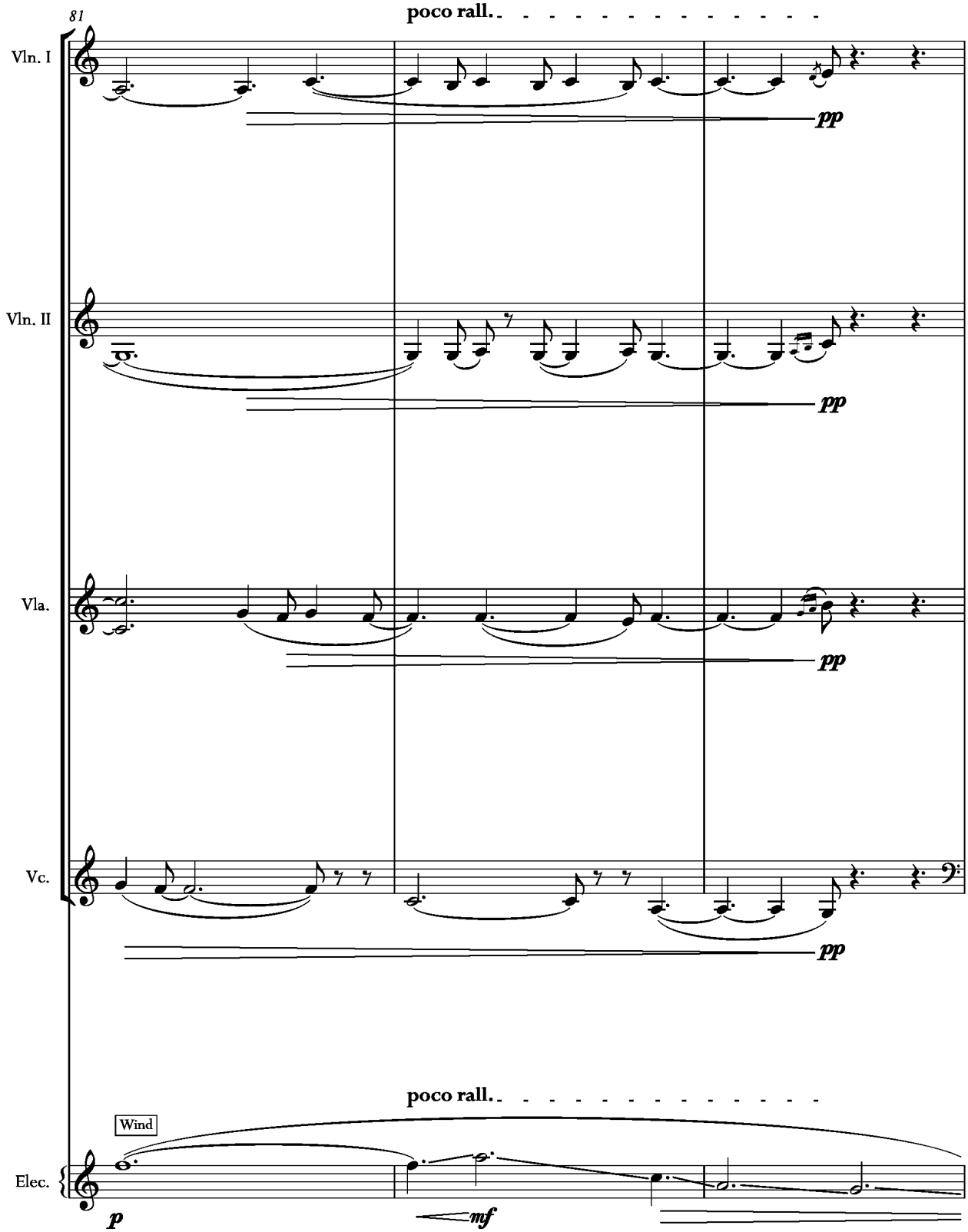

65
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Elec.
dolce
mp
p
mf
rit.
67
pp

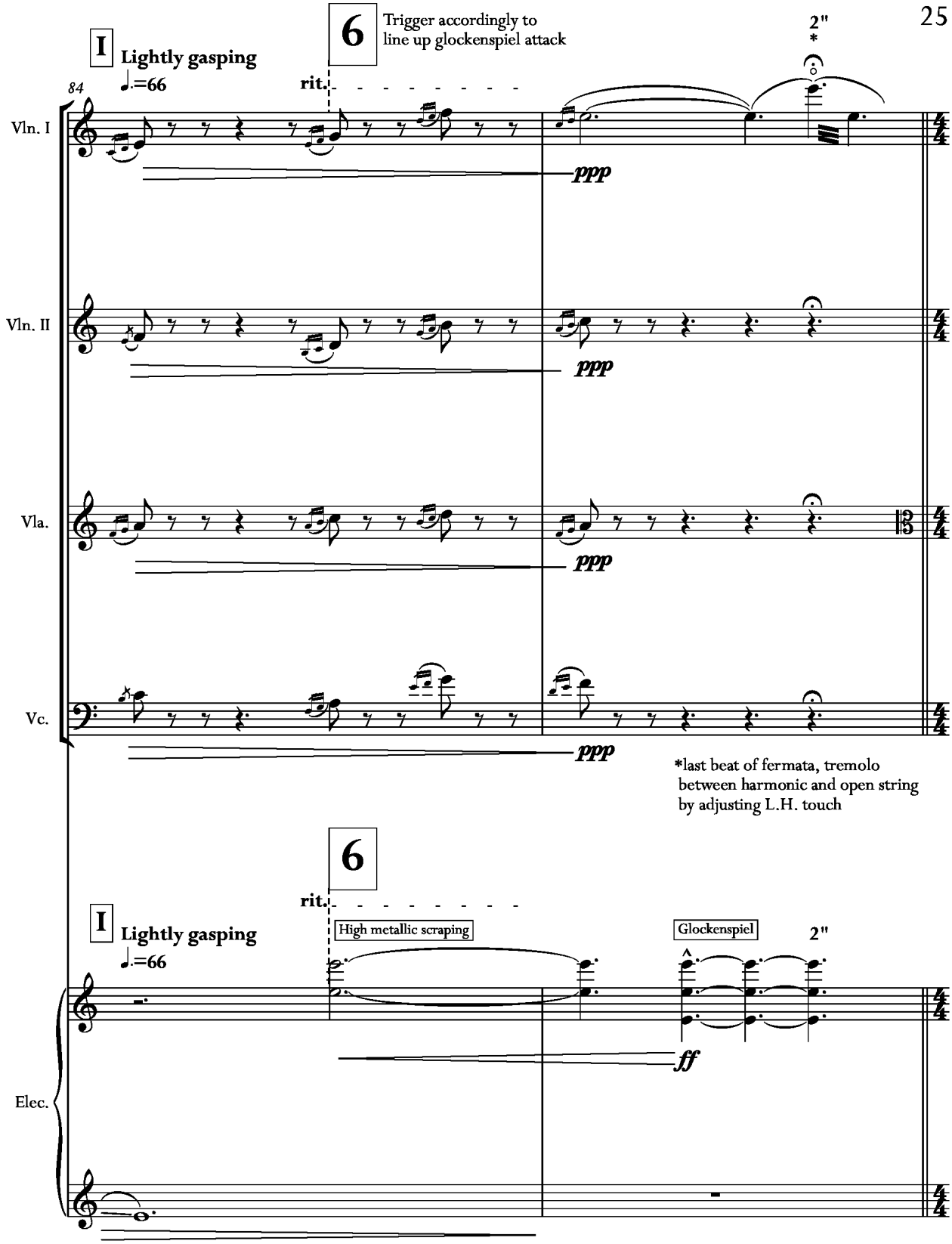

5
(2:31)
70
Vln. I
Vln. II
p
Vla.
pp
Vc.
pp
5
(2:31)
Rustle/Crackle
Elec.
pp
pp


G
(2:36)
Strong backbeat with a bluesy feel
72
♩.=108
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
pp
p
pp
p
pp
p
pp
G
(2:36)
Strong backbeat with a bluesy feel
♩.=108
Elec.
Rustling
filter sweep

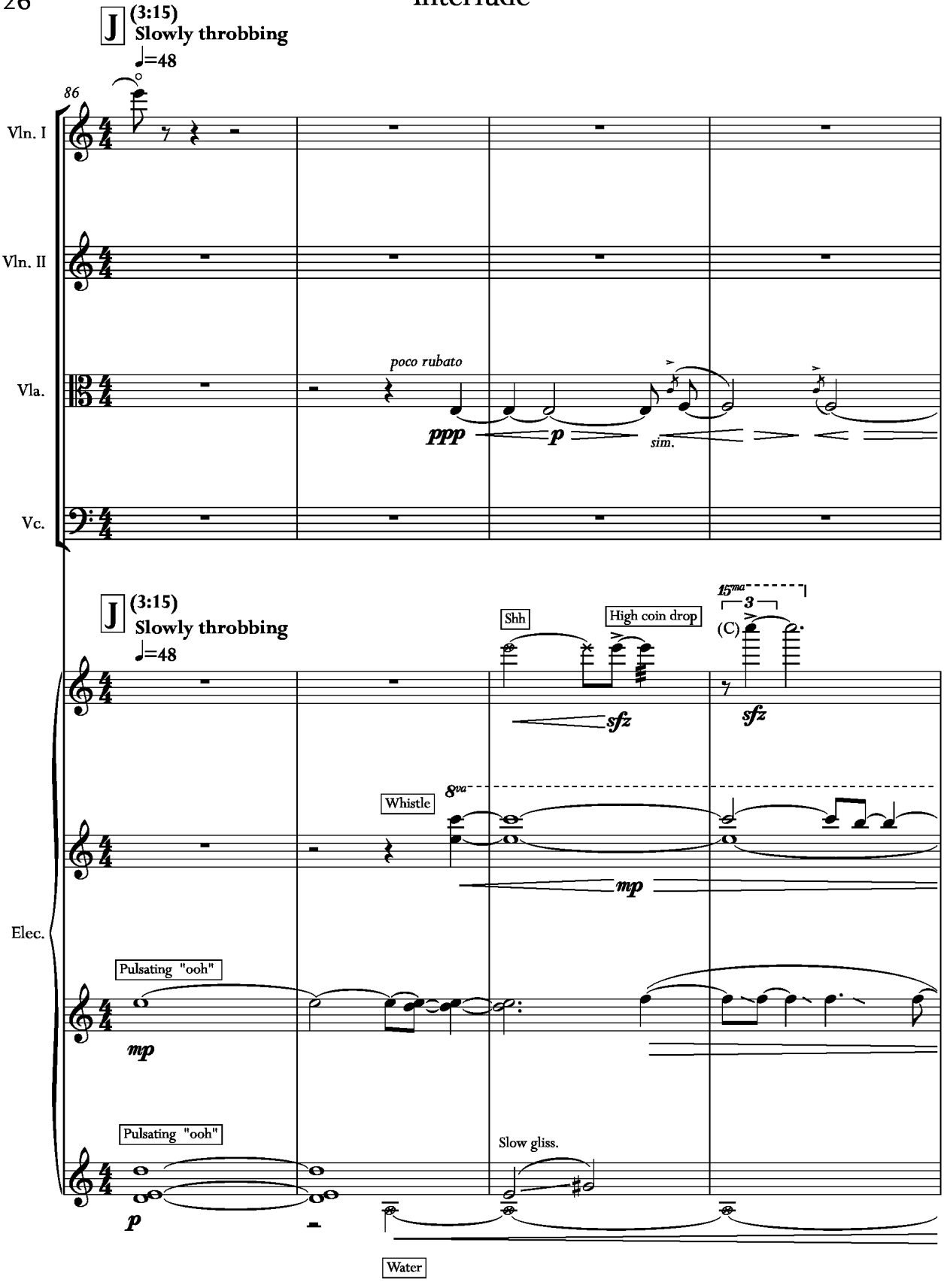

75
Allargando
Vln. I
pp
mp
Vln. II
p
mp
Vla.
p
mp
Vc.
mp
Rustle/Crackle
Allargando
Elec.
p
mp
mp

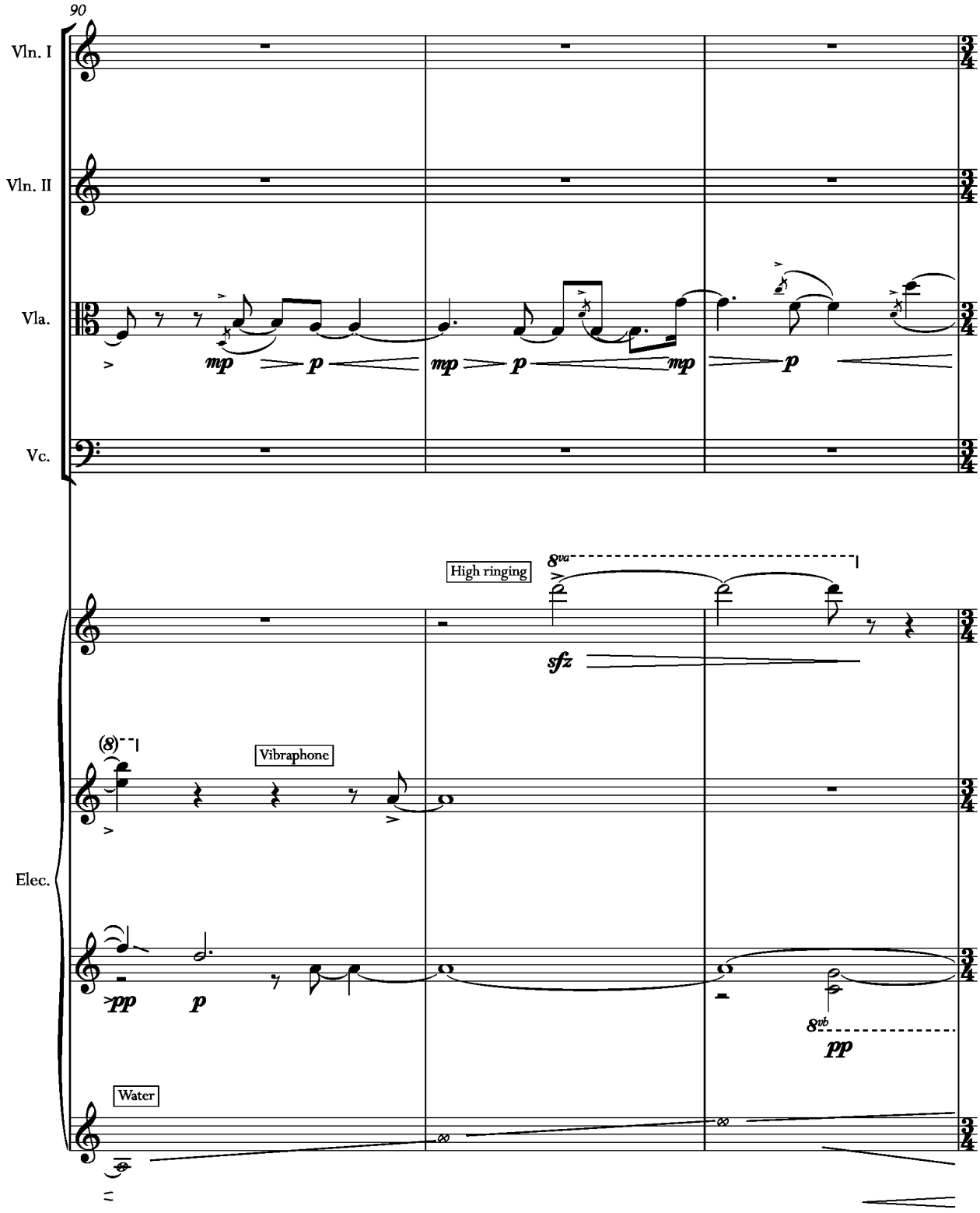

In tempo — somewhat slower
Heavily swinging
♩.=96
H
(2:52)
78
Vln. I
molto
sfz
p
sfz
mp
p
Vln. II
mf
sfz
pp
sfz
mp
Vla.
sfz mp
Vc.
molto
sfz
mp
In tempo — somewhat slower
Heavily swinging
♩.=96
H
(2:52)
Elec.
mf
mp
Wind Noise
mp

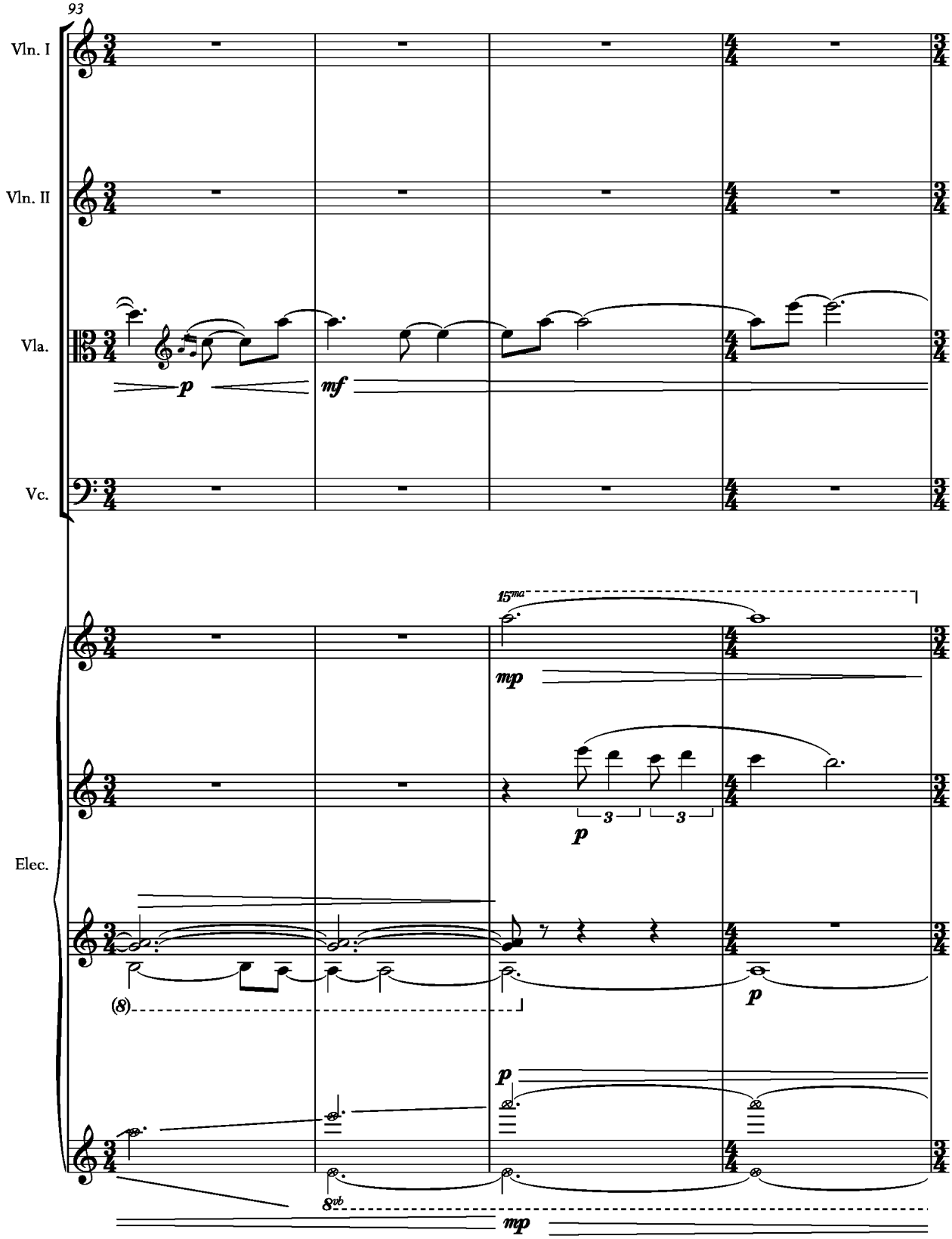

81
poco rall.
Vln. I
pp
Vln. II
pp
Vla.
pp
Vc.
pp
poco rall.
Wind
Elec.
p
mf

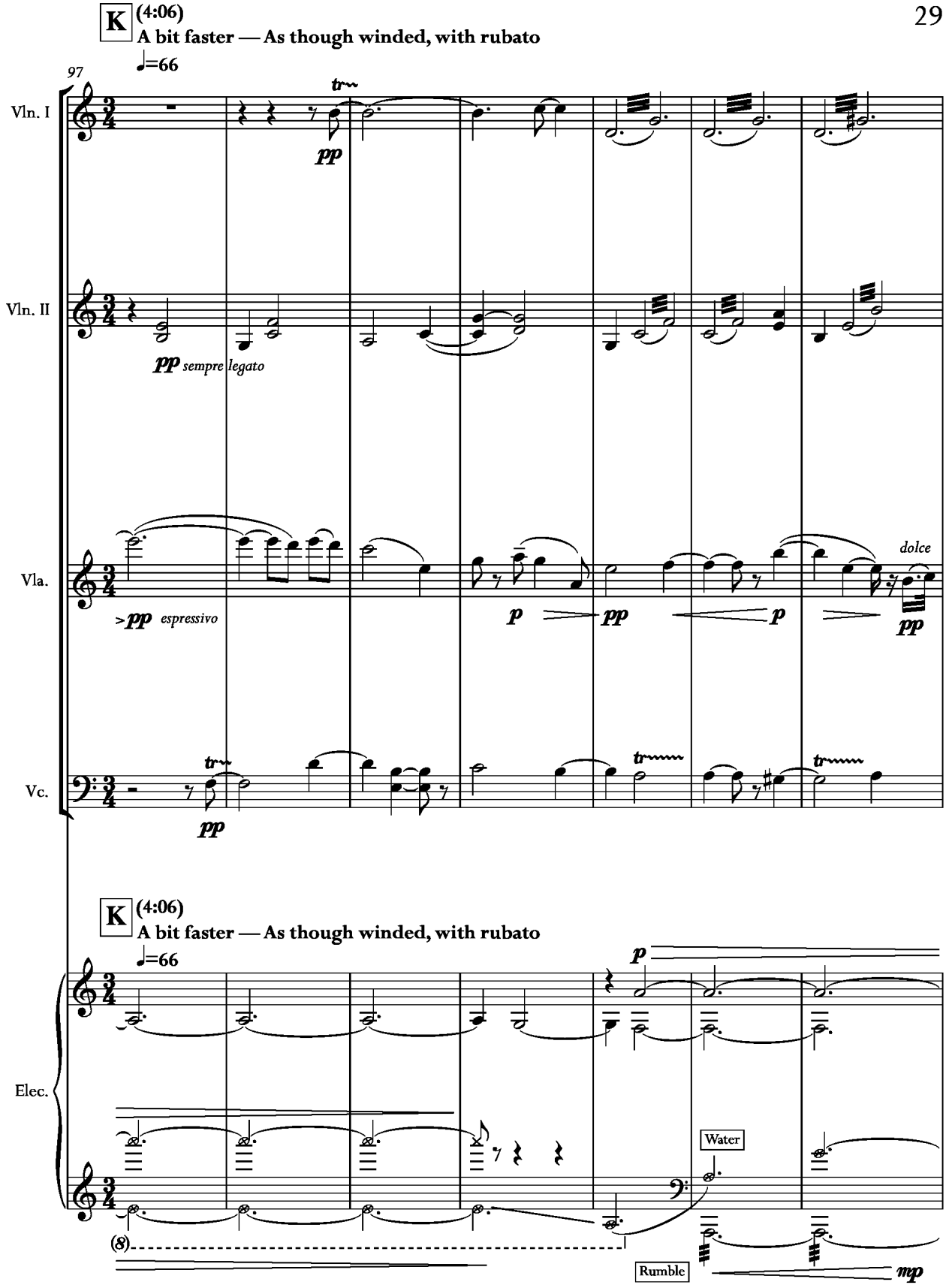

I
Lightly gasping
♩.=66
84
6
Trigger accordingly to
line up glockenspiel attack
rit.
2"
*
Vln. I
ppp
Vln. II
ppp
Vla.
ppp
Vc.
ppp
*last beat of fermata, tremolo
between harmonic and open string
by adjusting L.H. touch
6
rit.
I
Lightly gasping
♩.=66
High metallic scraping
Glockenspiel
2"
ff
Elec.

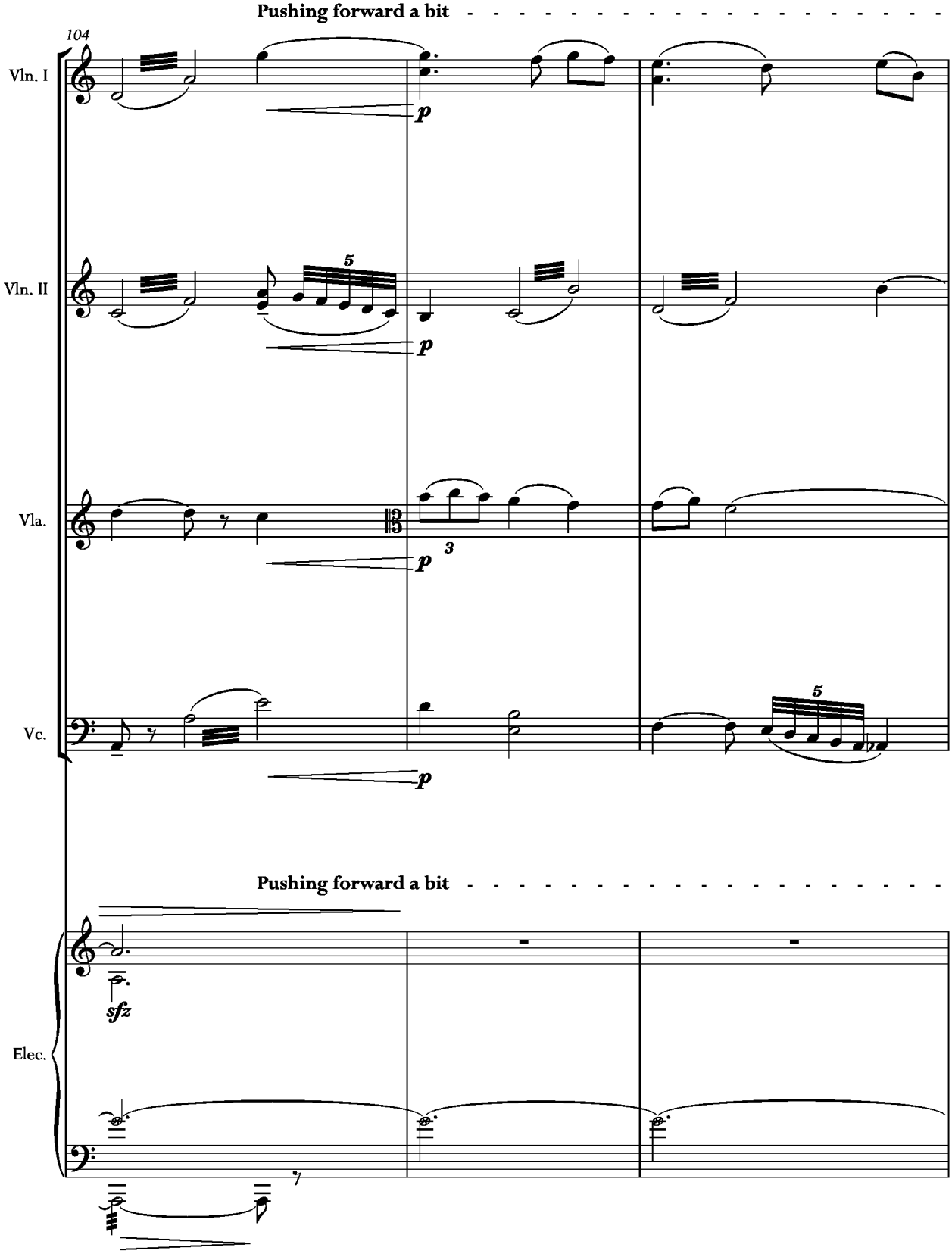
Interlude

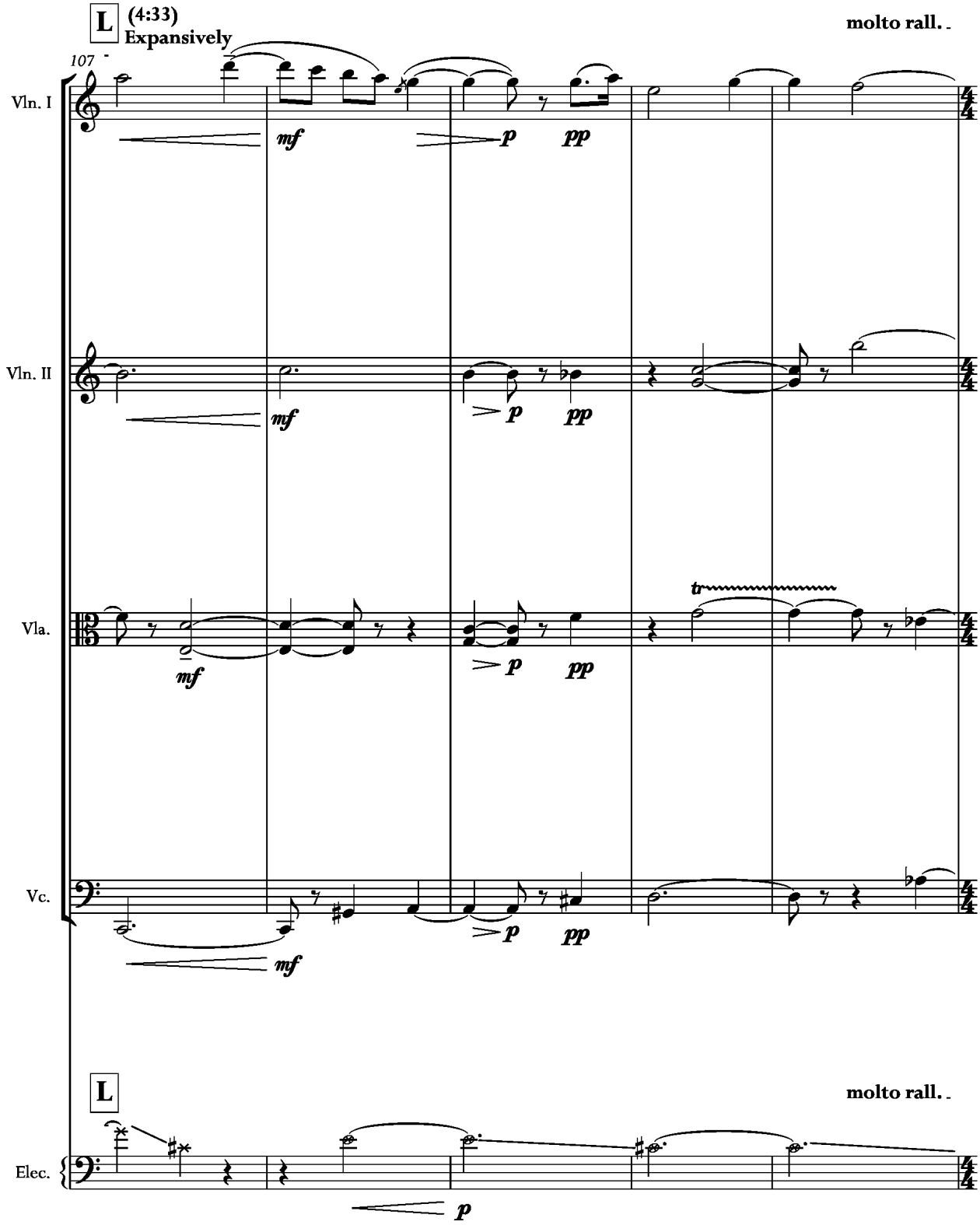

J (3:15)
Slowly throbbing
♩=48
86
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
poco rubato
ppp
p
sim.
J (3:15)
Slowly throbbing
♩=48
Elec.
Shh
High coin drop
15ma
3
(C)
sfz
sfz
Whistle
8va
mp
Pulsating "ooh"
mp
Pulsating "ooh"
p
Slow gliss.
Water

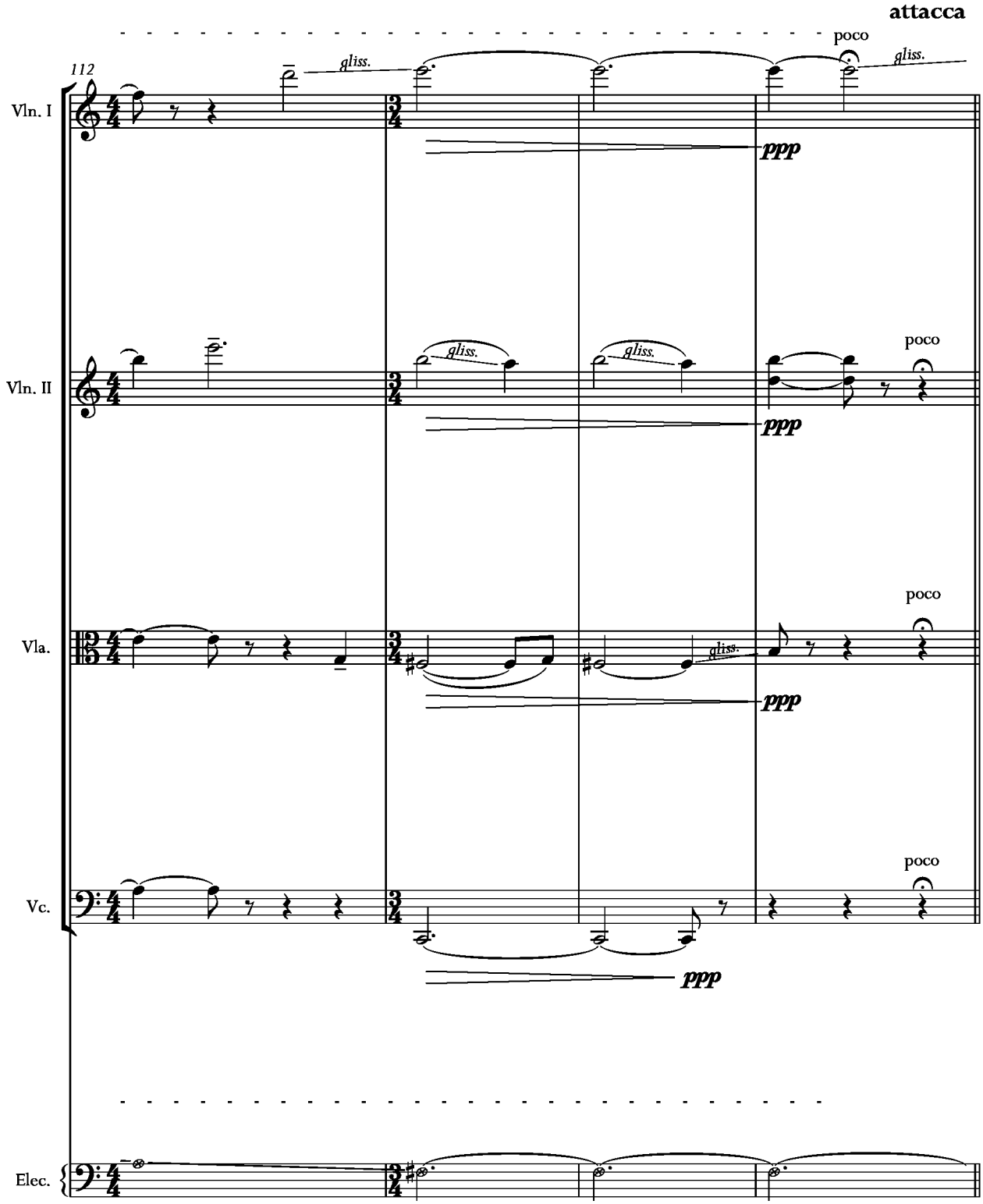

90
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Elec.
mp
p
mp
p
mp
p
High ringing
8va
sfz
(8)
Vibraphone
pp
p
8vb
pp
Water

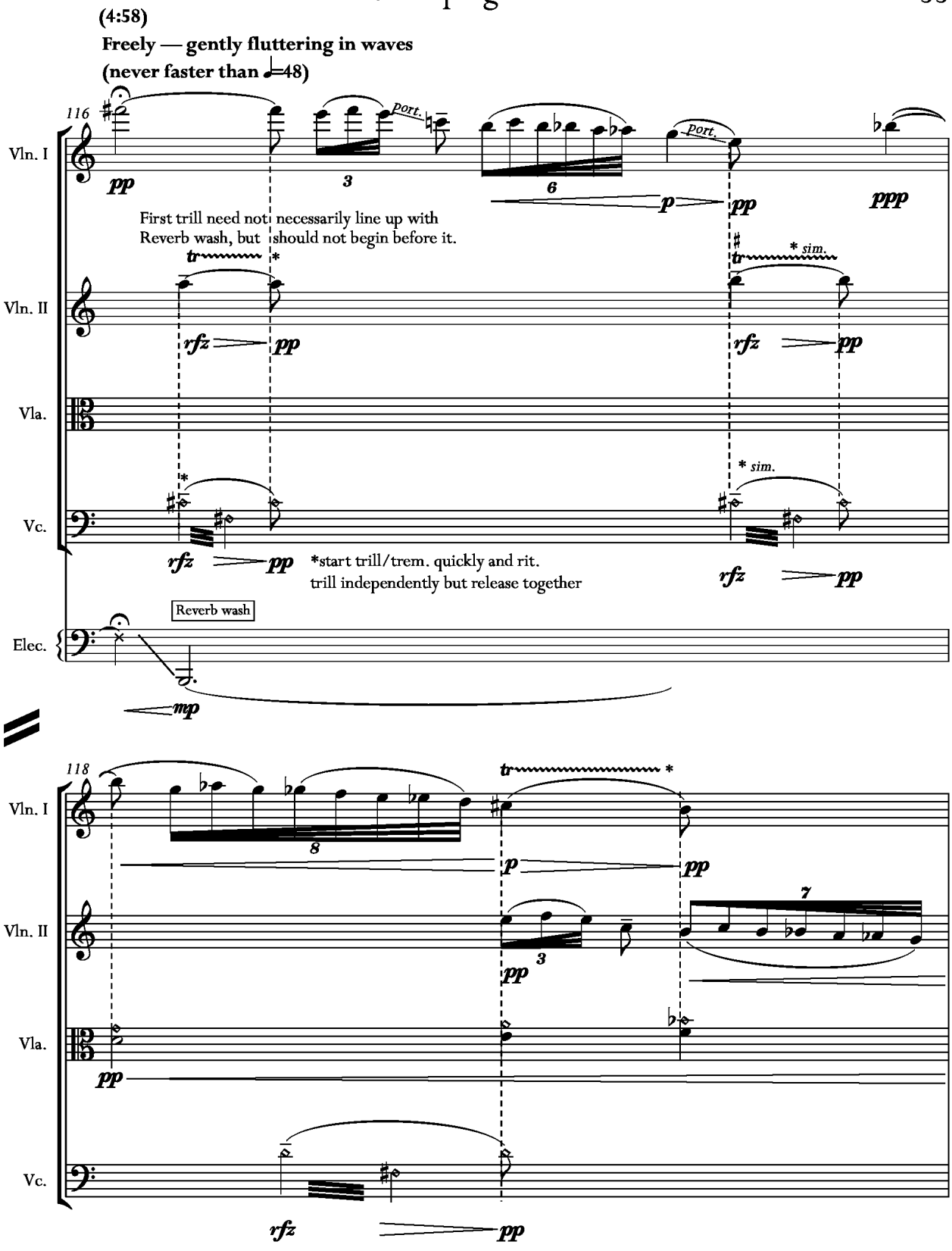

93
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Elec.
p
mf
15ma
mp
3
3
p
(8)
p
8vb
mp

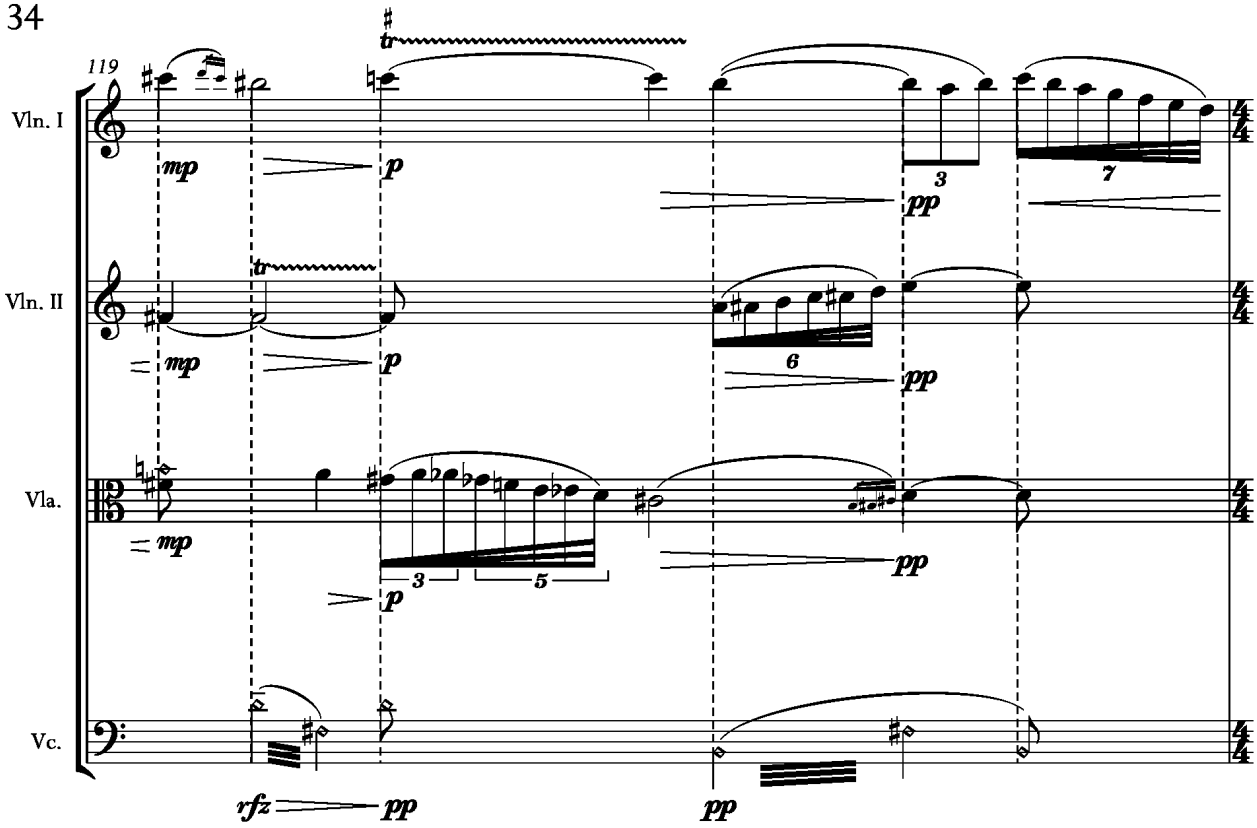

K (4:06)
A bit faster — As though winded, with rubato
♩=66
97
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
pp
pp sempre legato
>pp espressivo
p
pp
p
dolce
pp
K (4:06)
A bit faster — As though winded, with rubato
♩=66
Elec.
p
Water
Rumble
mp

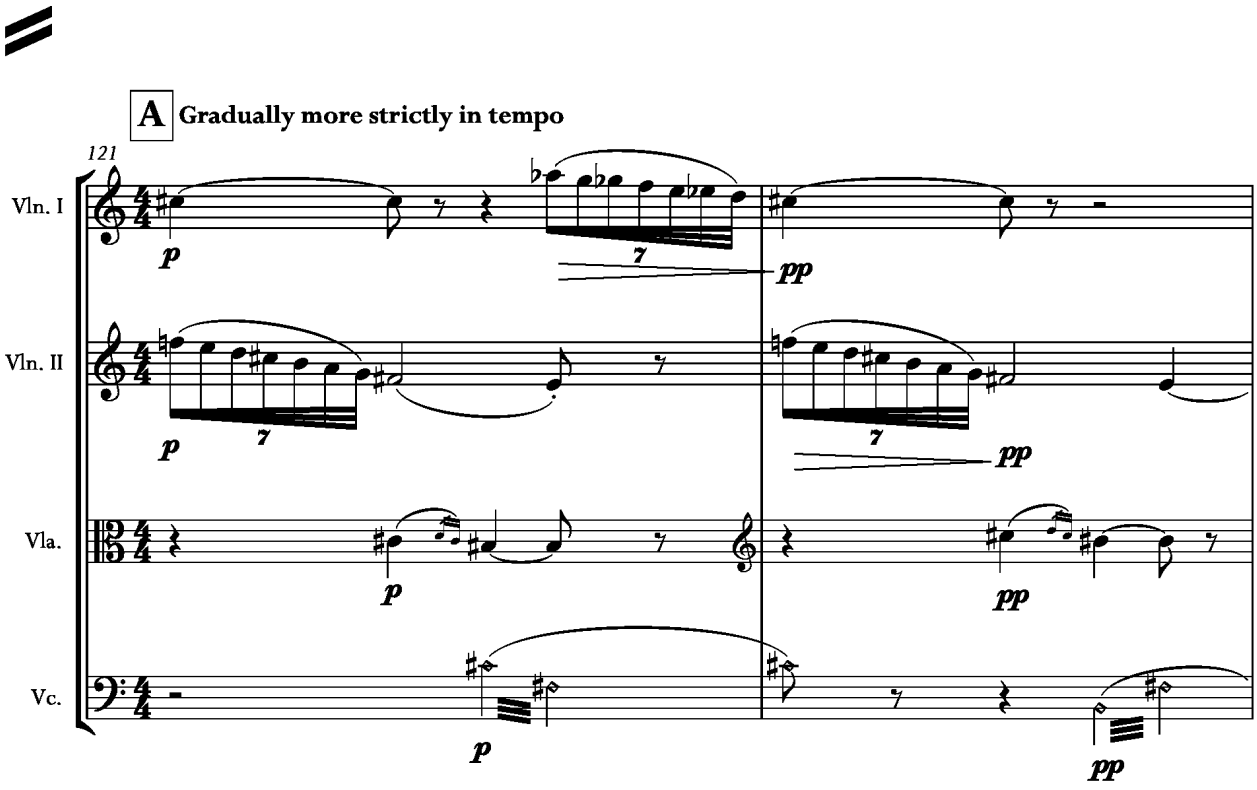

Pushing forward a bit
104
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
p
5
3
Pushing forward a bit
Elec.
sfz

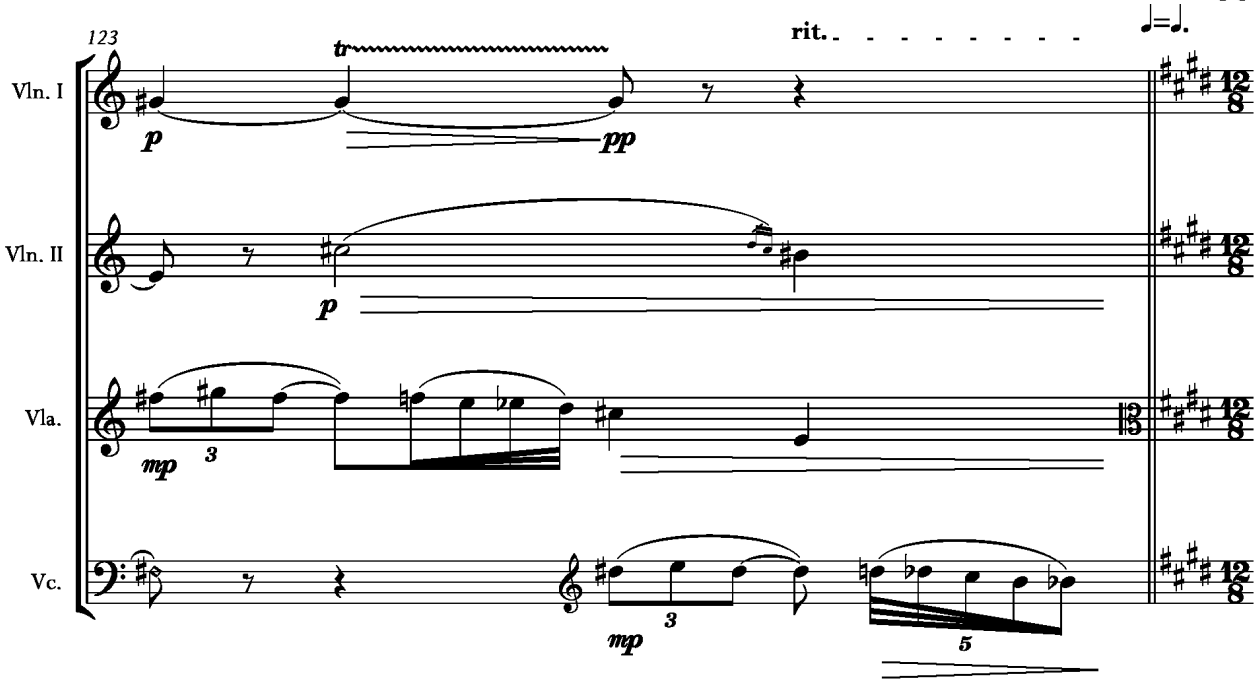

L
(4:33)
Expansively
molto rall.
107
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Elec.
mf
p
pp
tr
L
molto rall.
p

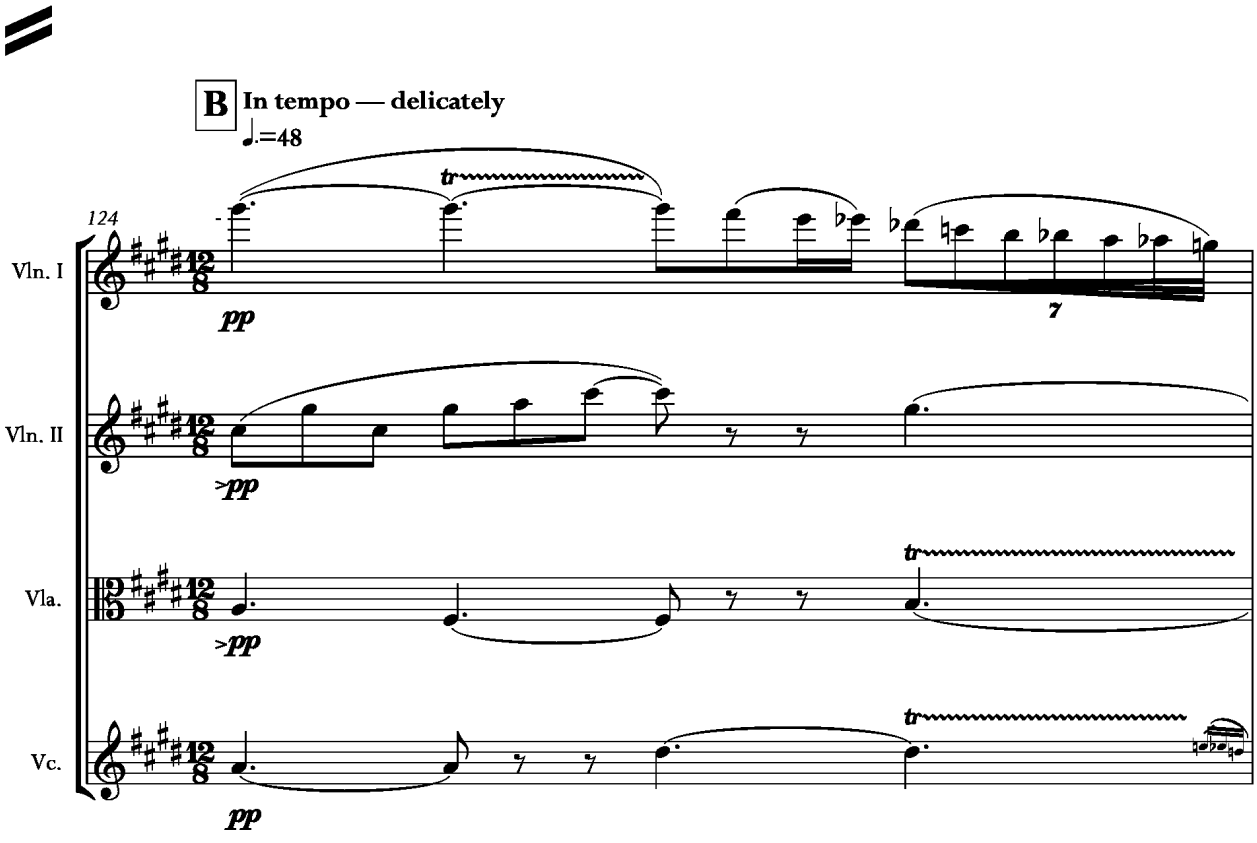

attacca
112
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Elec.
gliss.
poco
ppp


(4:58)
Freely — gently fluttering in waves
(never faster than ♩=48)
116
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Elec.
pp
port.
3
6
p
pp
ppp
First trill need not necessarily line up with
Reverb wash, but should not begin before it.
tr
*
rfz
* sim.
*start trill/trem. quickly and rit.
trill independently but release together
Reverb wash
mp
118
8
7
mp

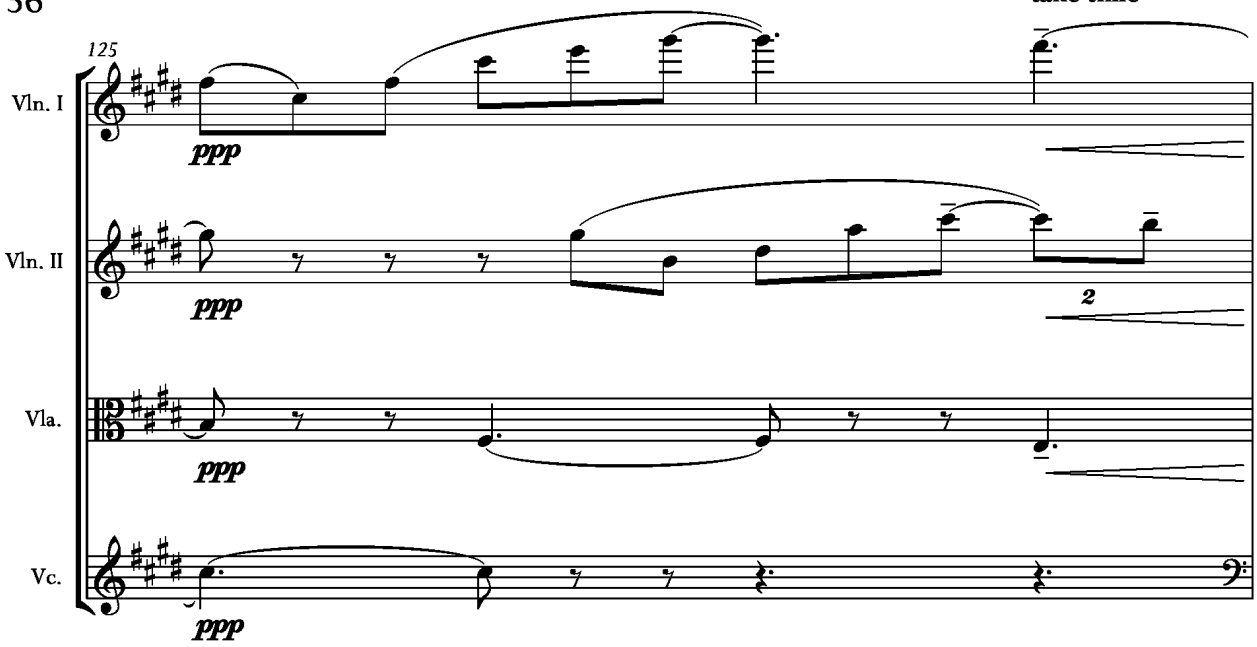

119
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
mp
p
pp
rfz
tr
3
5
6
7


A Gradually more strictly in tempo
121
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
p
pp
7

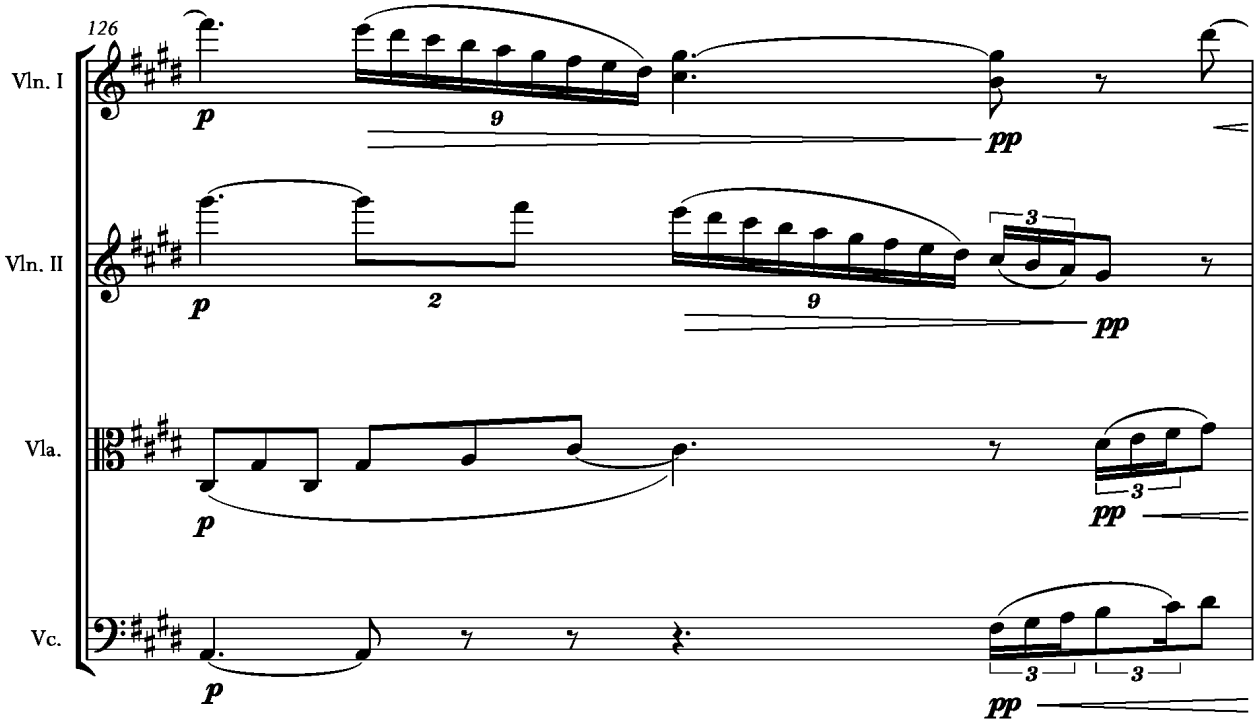

123
rit.
♩=♩.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
p
pp
mp
3
5

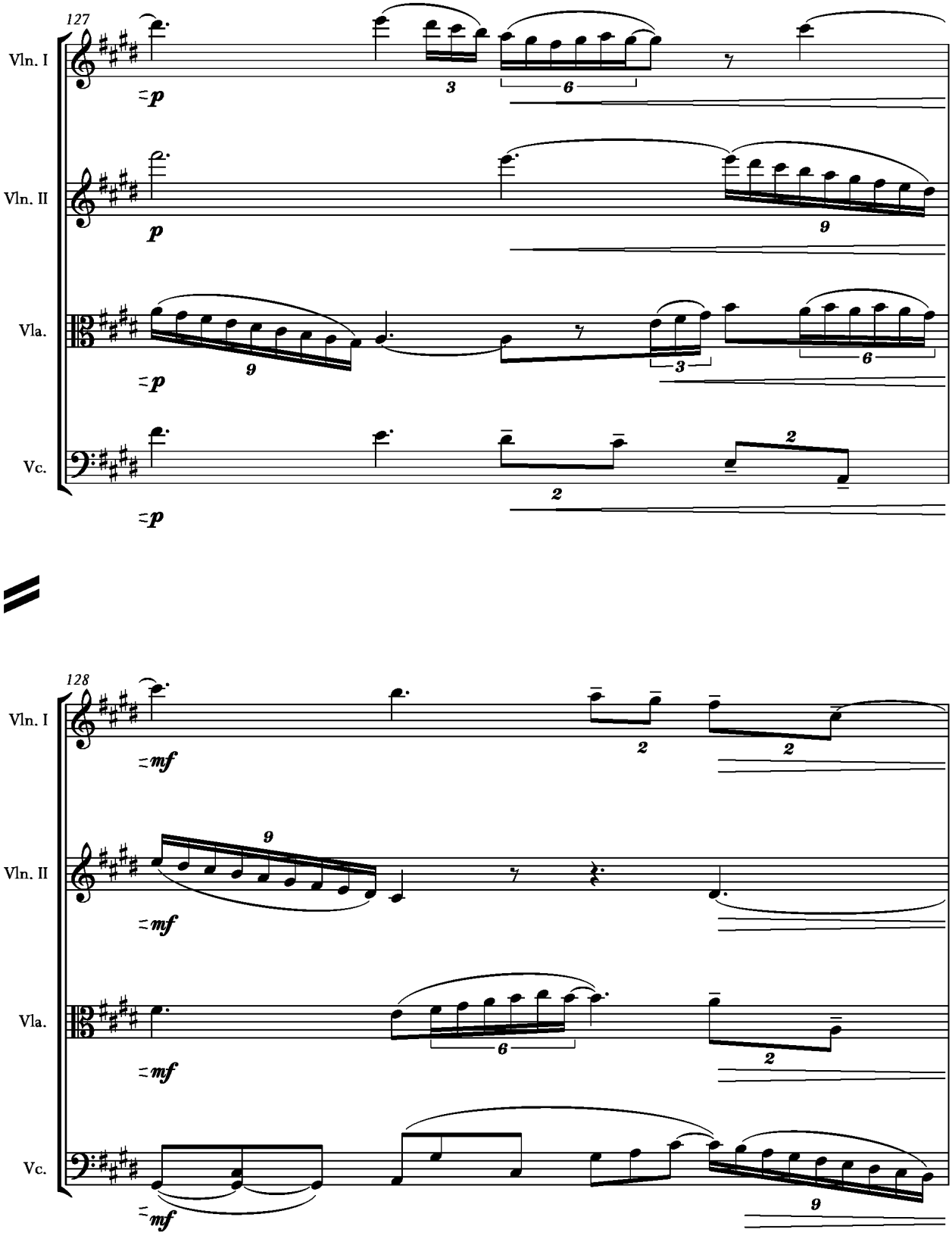

B
In tempo — delicately
♩.=48
124
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
pp
>pp
tr
7

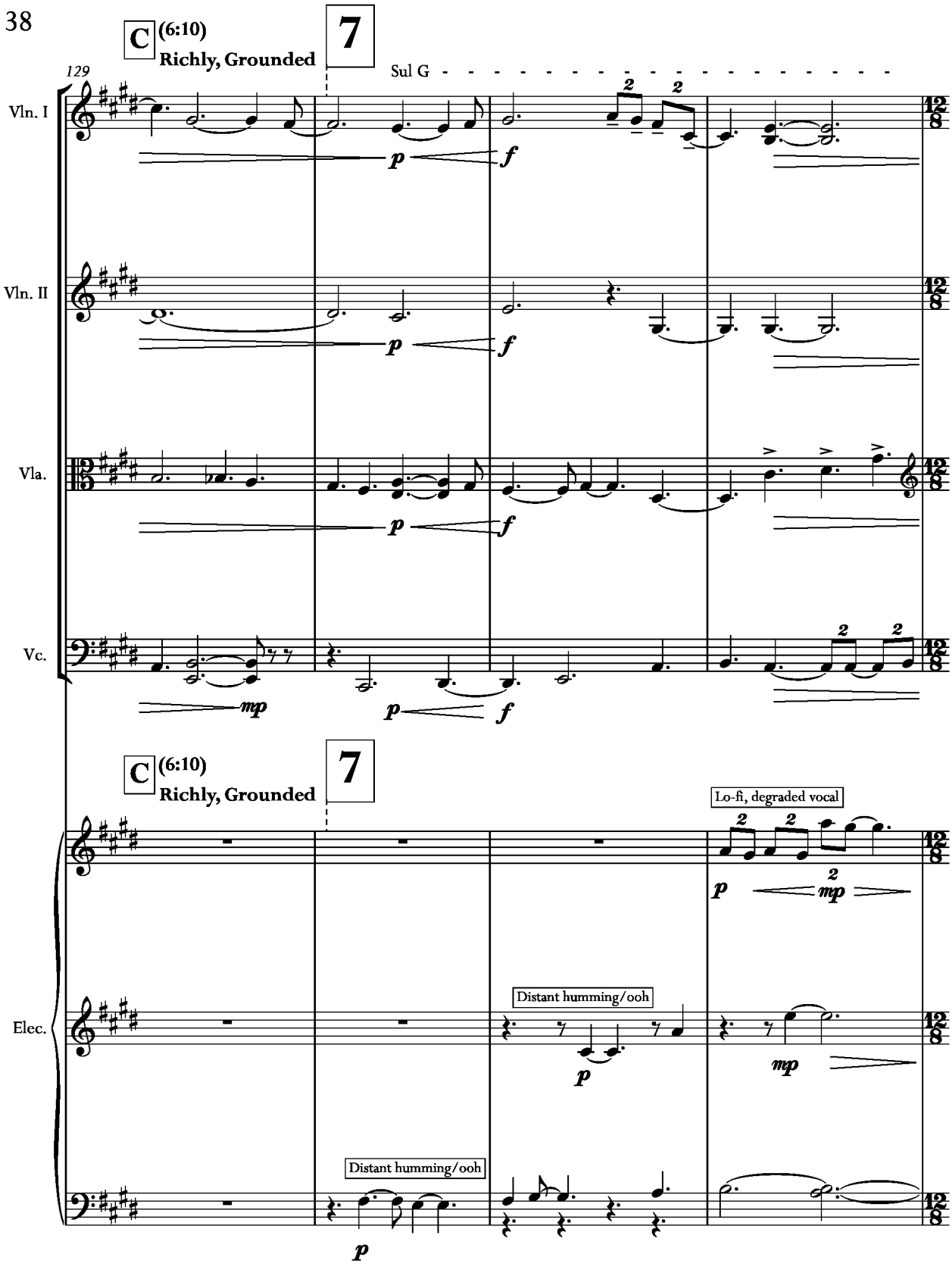
take time

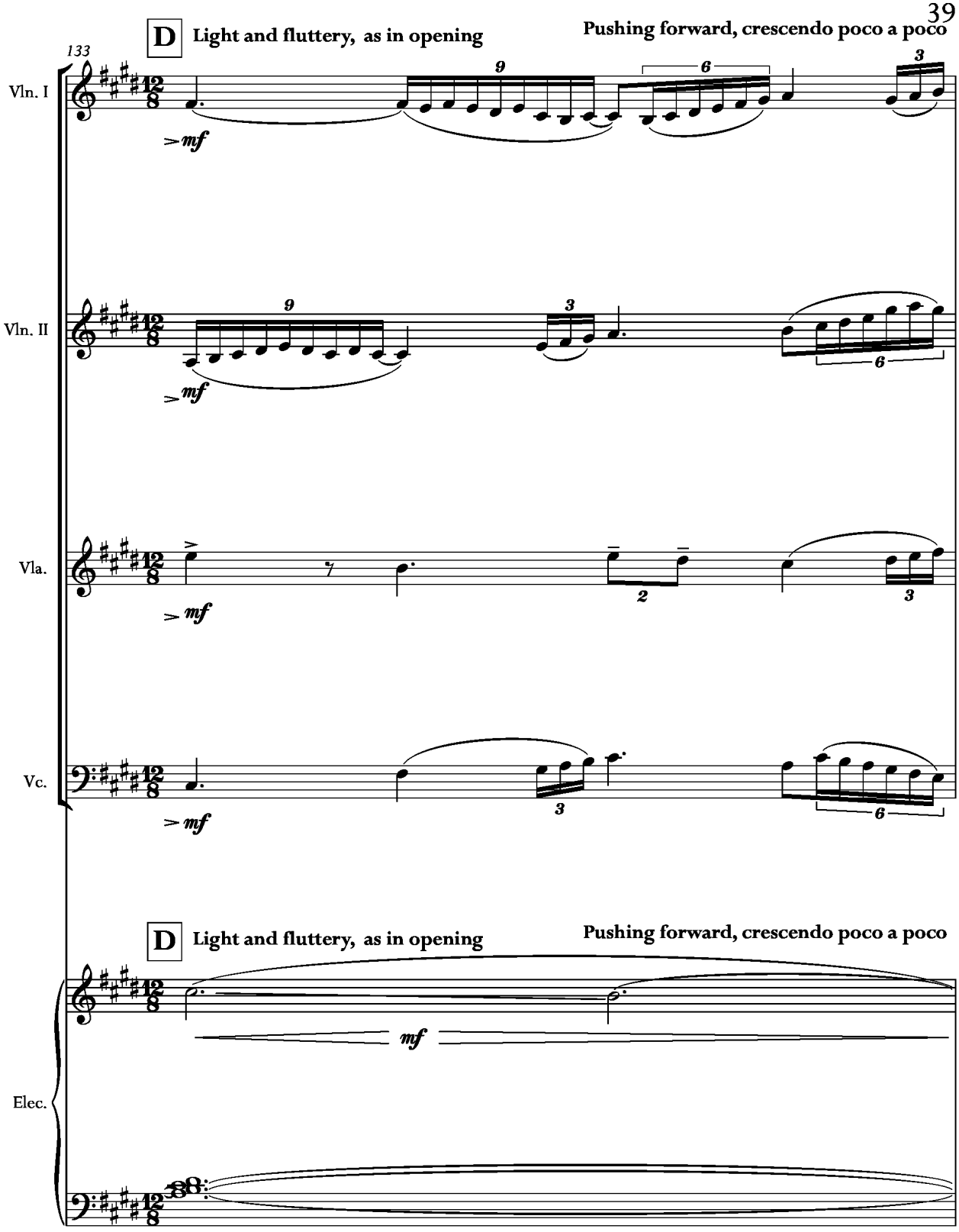


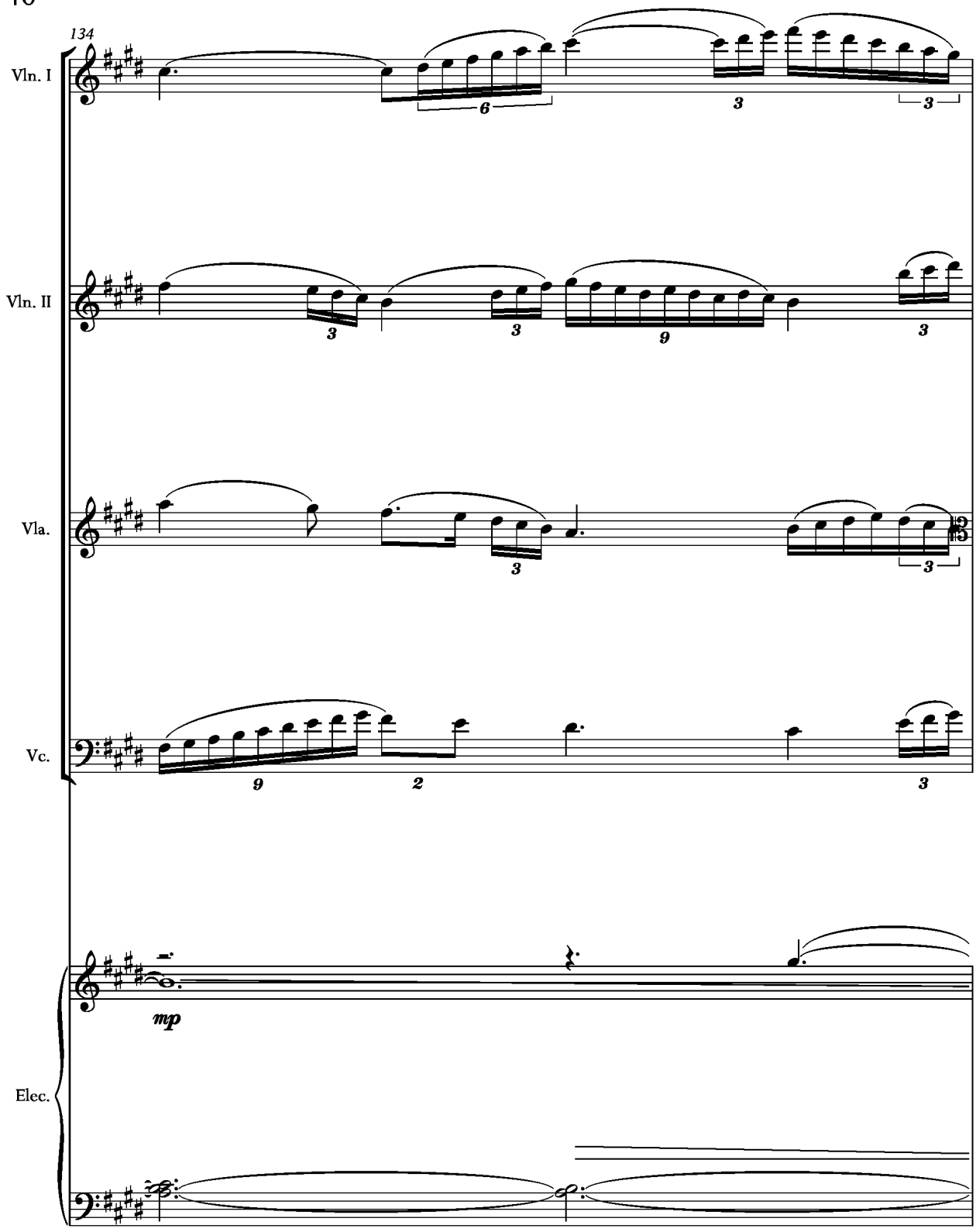
A tempo — swirling with a heavy pulse (𝅗𝅥.)

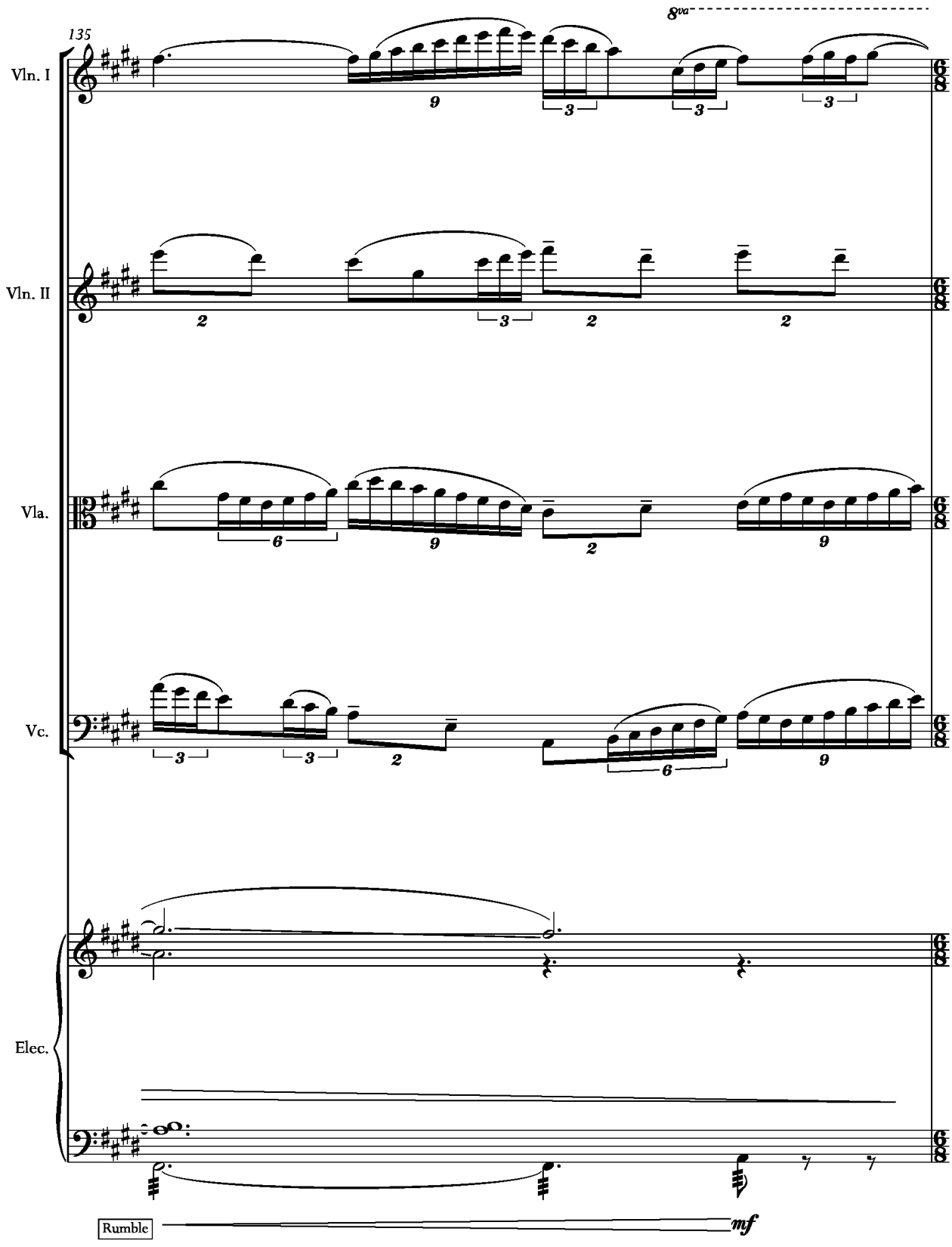


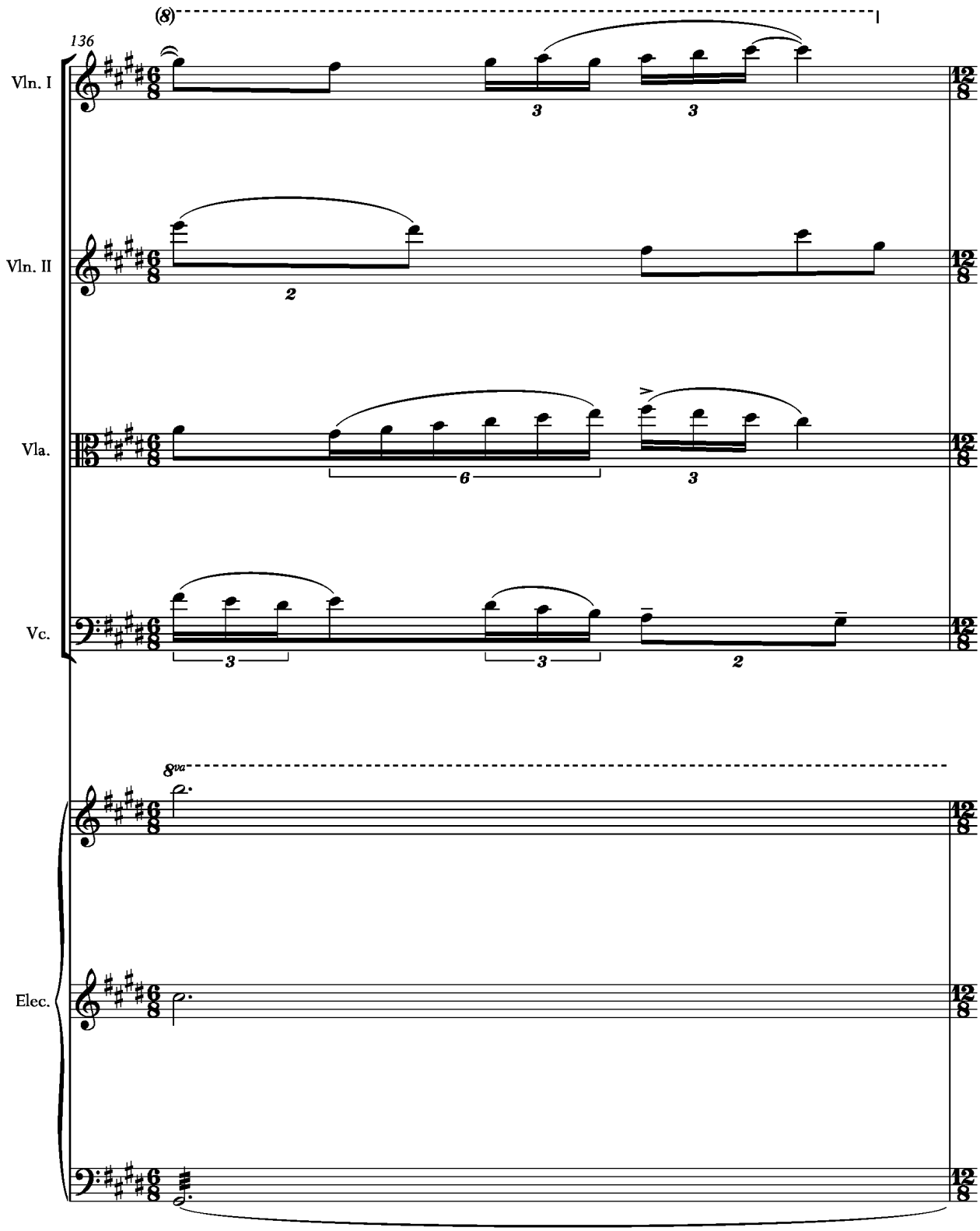

127
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
p
128
mf

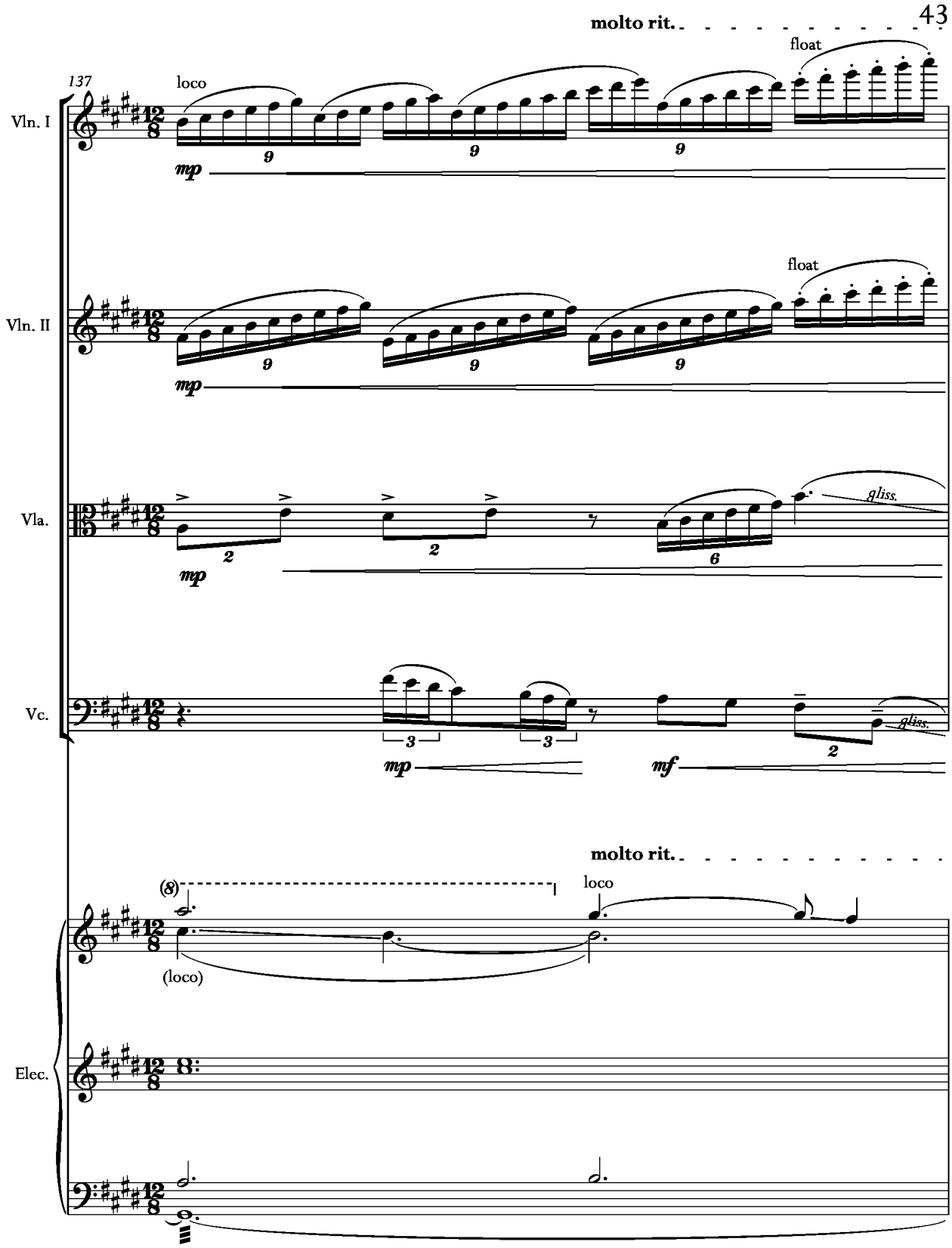

C (6:10)
Richly, Grounded
7
129
Sul G
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
C (6:10)
Richly, Grounded
7
Lo-fi, degraded vocal
Elec.
Distant humming/ooh
Distant humming/ooh

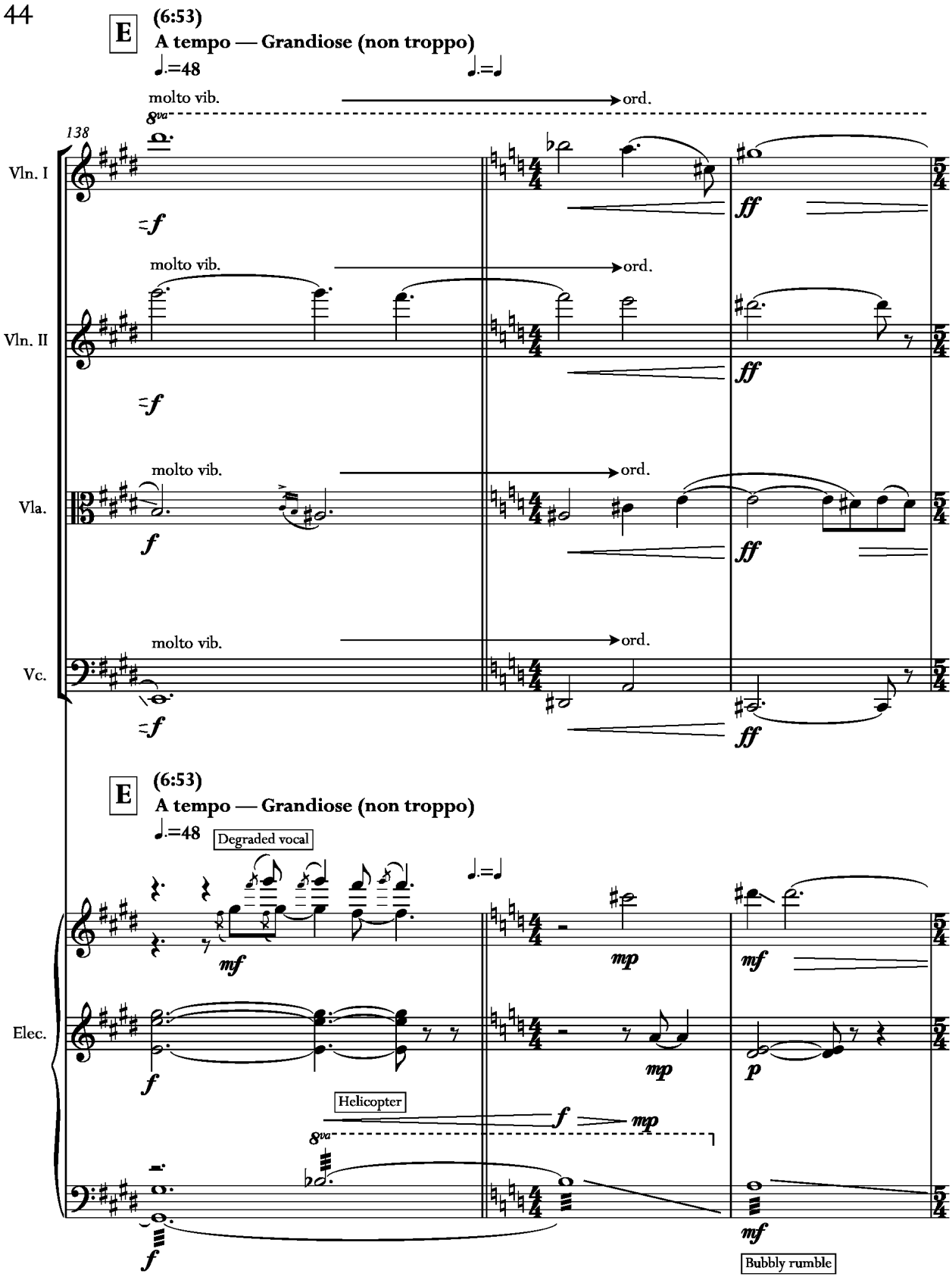

133
D
Light and fluttery, as in opening
Pushing forward, crescendo poco a poco
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Elec.
mf

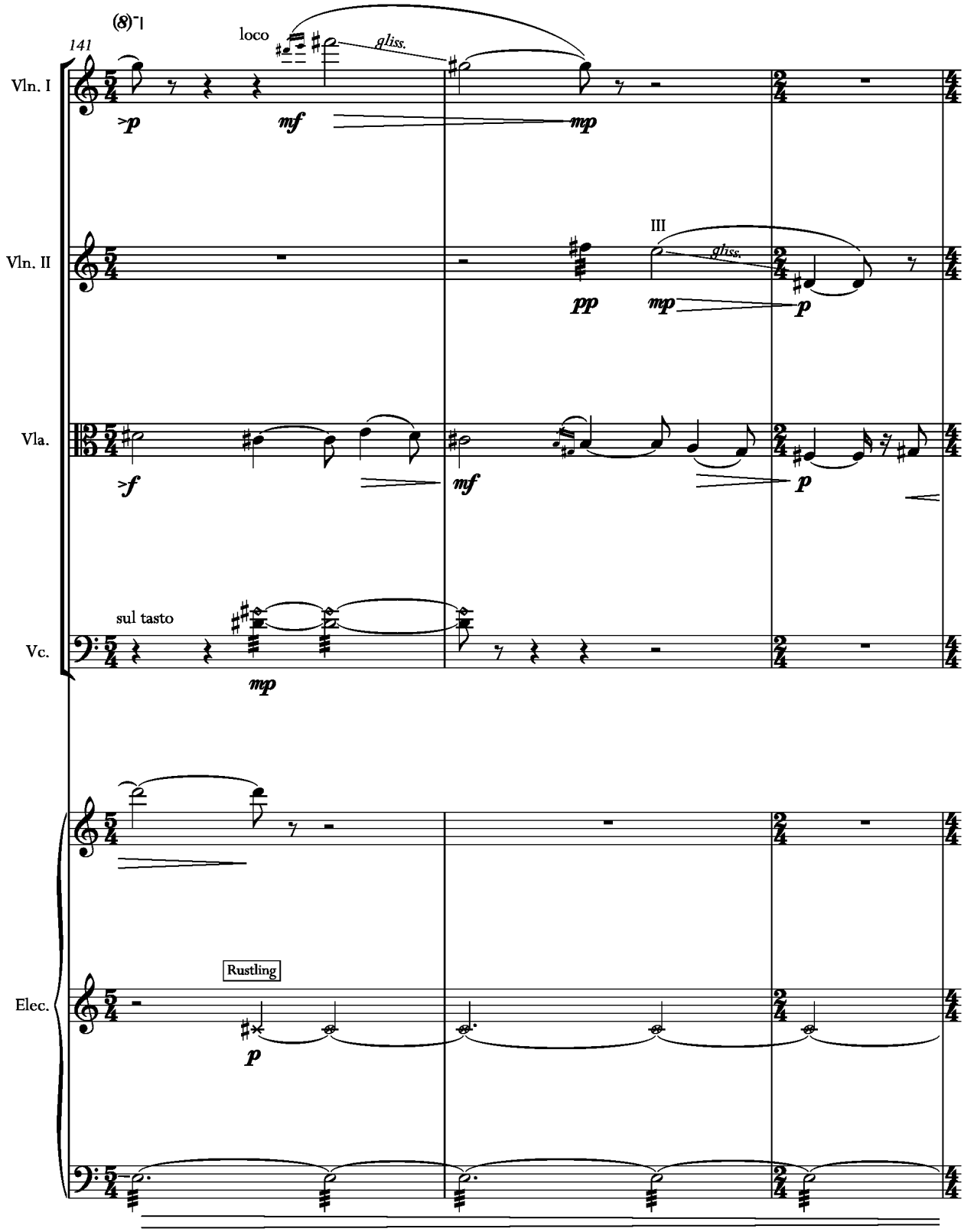

134
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Elec.
mp

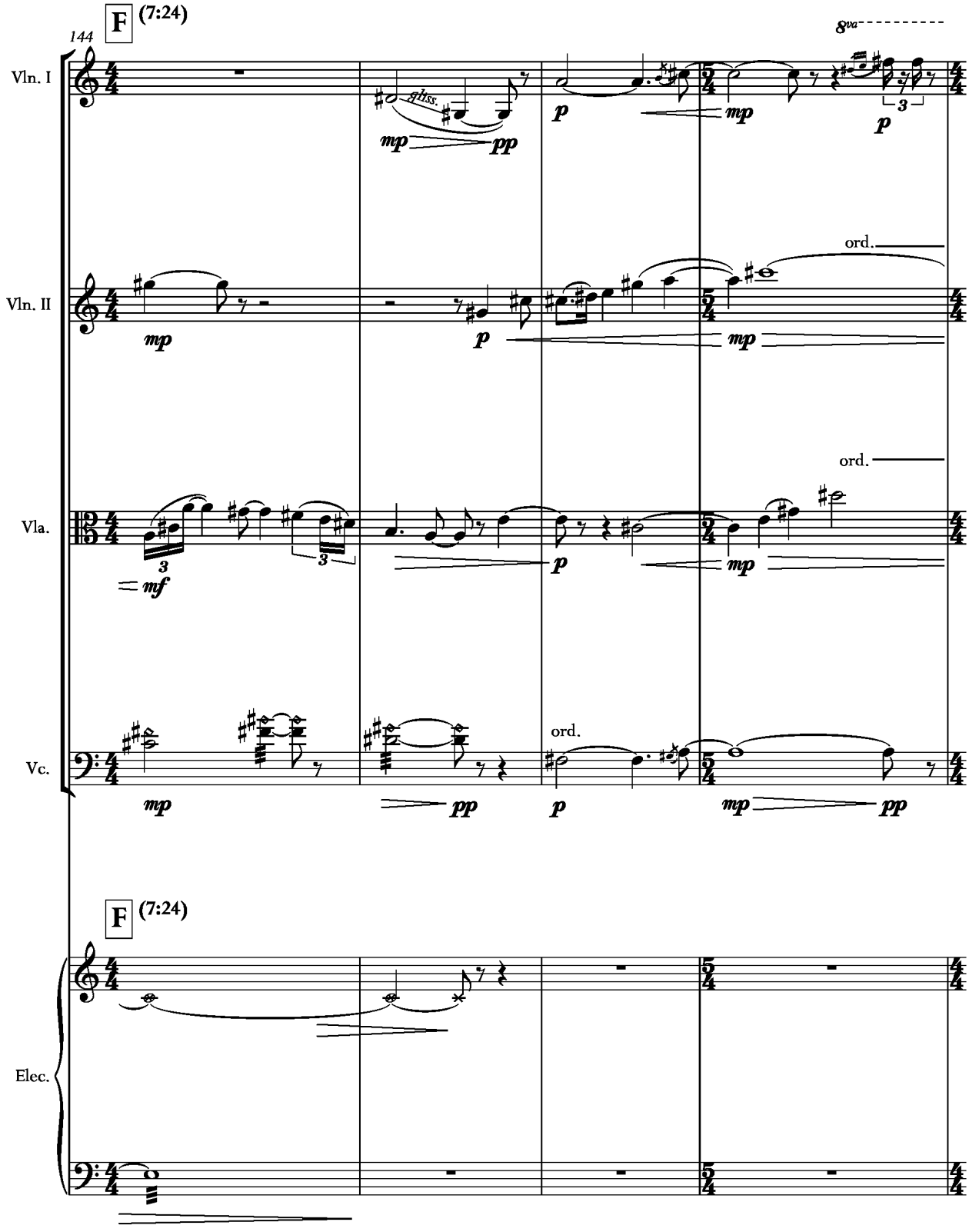

135
8va
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Elec.
Rumble
mf

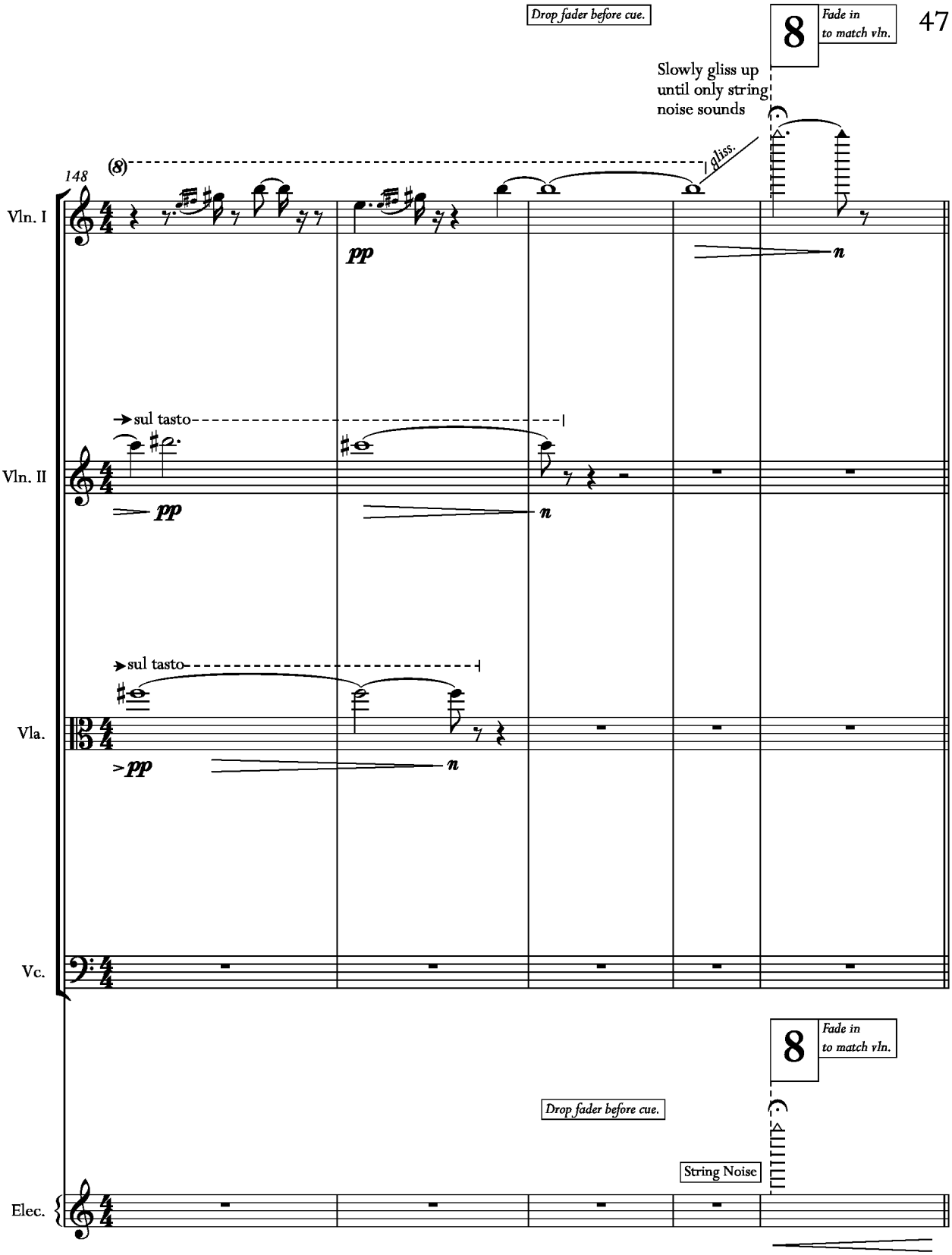

(8)
136
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
8va
Elec.


molto rit.
float
137
loco
Vln. I
mp
Vln. II
float
Vla.
mp
gliss.
Vc.
mp
mf
gliss.
molto rit.
(8)
loco
(loco)
Elec.


E
(6:53)
A tempo — Grandiose (non troppo)
♩.=48
♩.=♩
molto vib.
ord.
8va
138
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
f
ff
E
(6:53)
A tempo — Grandiose (non troppo)
♩.=48
Degraded vocal
Elec.
mf
mp
p
Helicopter
Bubbly rumble


141
(8)
loco
gliss.
Vln. I
Vln. II
III
gliss.
Vla.
sul tasto
Vc.
Rustling
Elec.

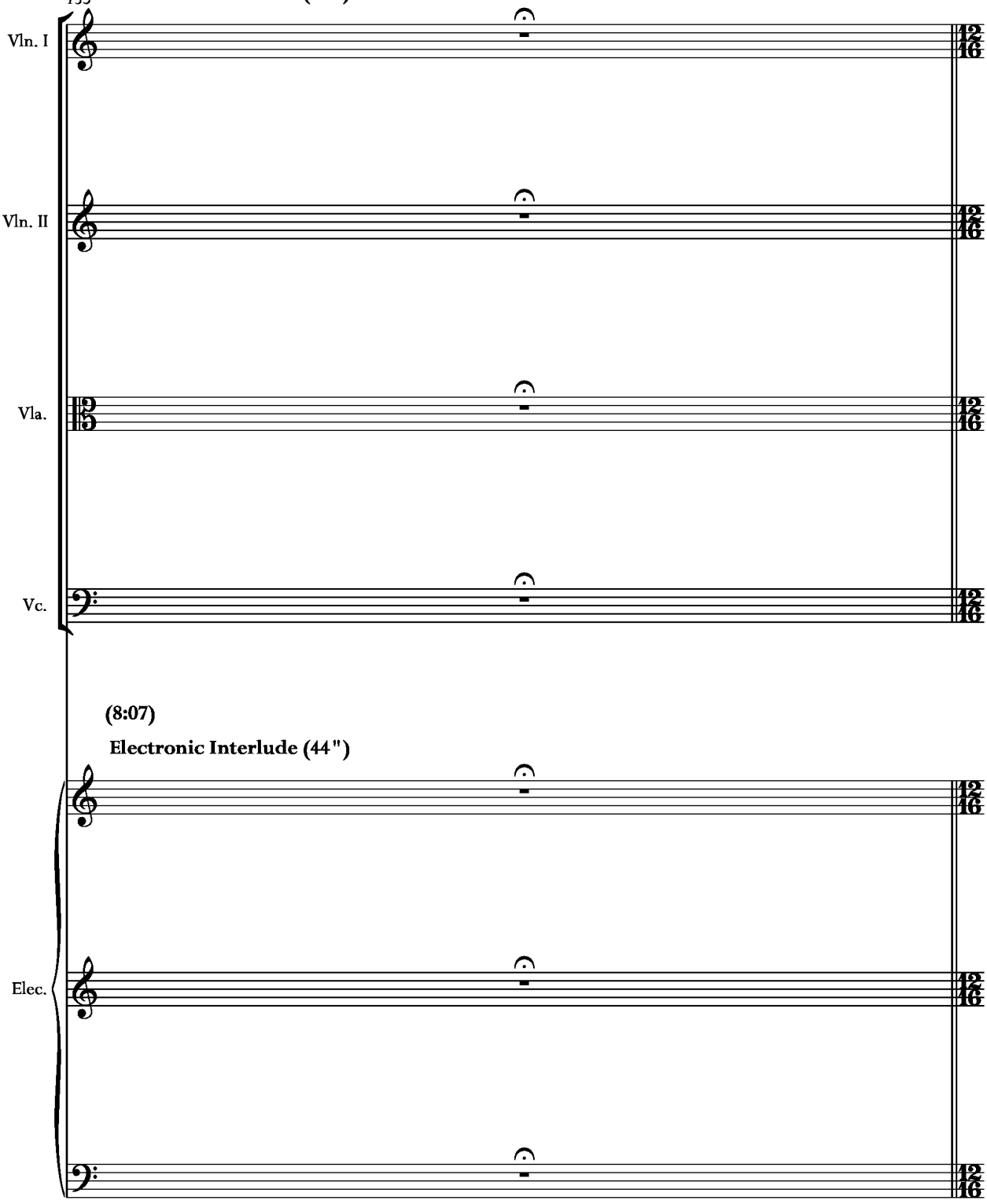

144
F (7:24)
8va
Vln. I
gliss.
mp
pp
p
mp
3
p
Vln. II
ord.
mp
p
mp
Vla.
ord.
3
3
mf
p
mp
Vc.
ord.
mp
pp
p
mp
pp
F (7:24)
Elec.

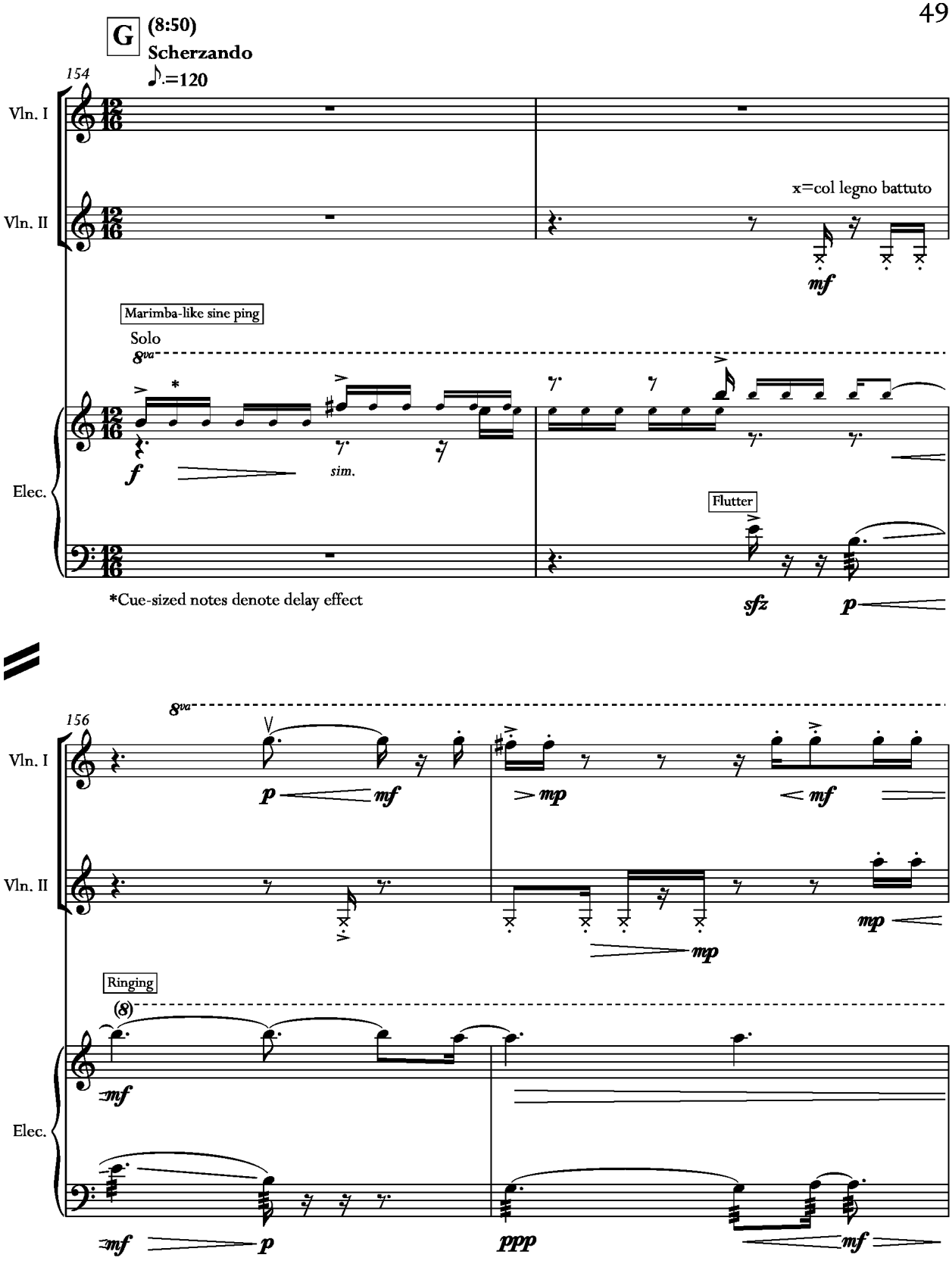

Drop fader before cue.
8
Fade in to match vln.
Slowly gliss up until only string noise sounds
gliss.
148
(8)
Vln. I
pp
n
sul tasto
Vln. II
pp
n
sul tasto
Vla.
pp
n
Vc.
8
Fade in to match vln.
Drop fader before cue.
String Noise
Elec.

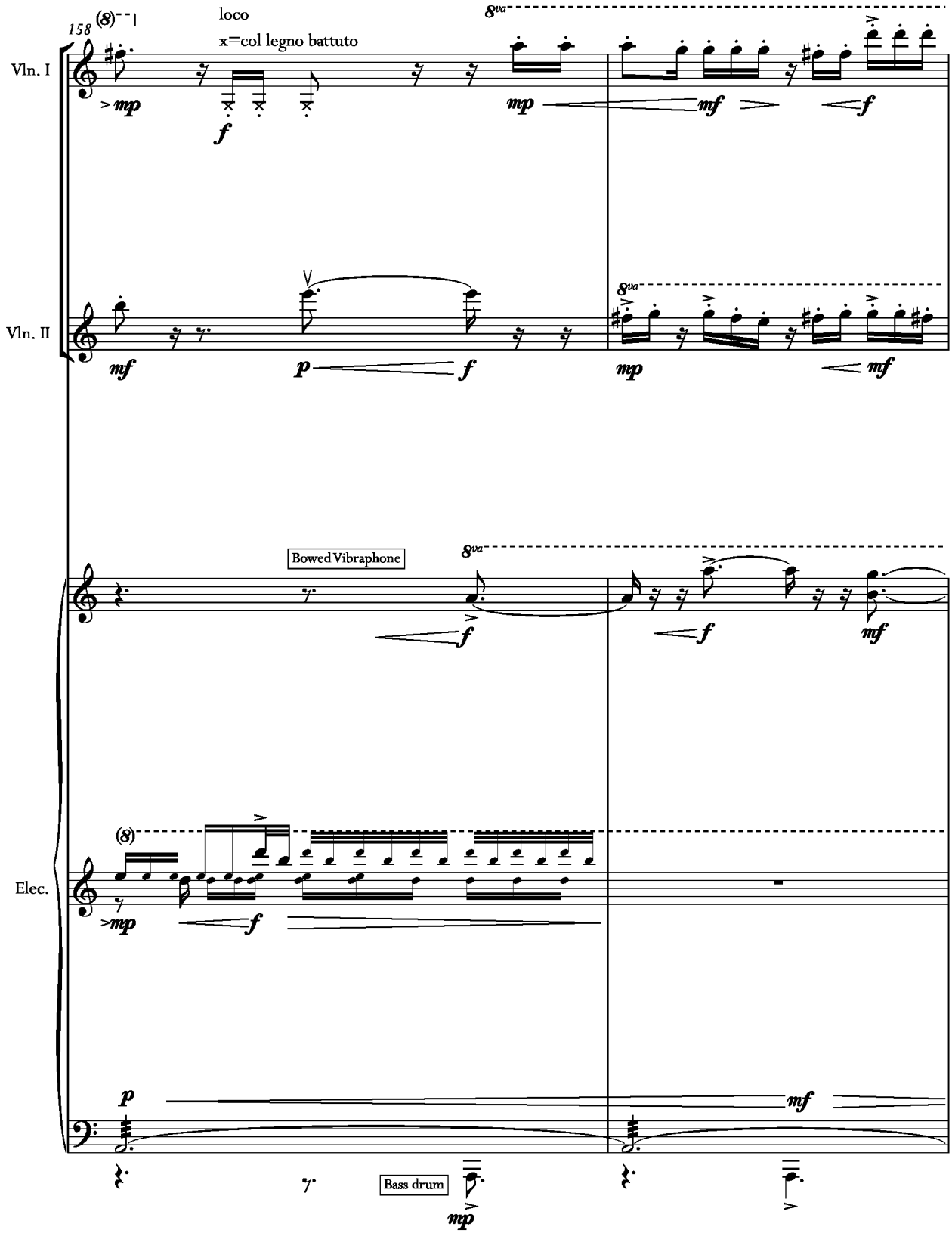
Interlude

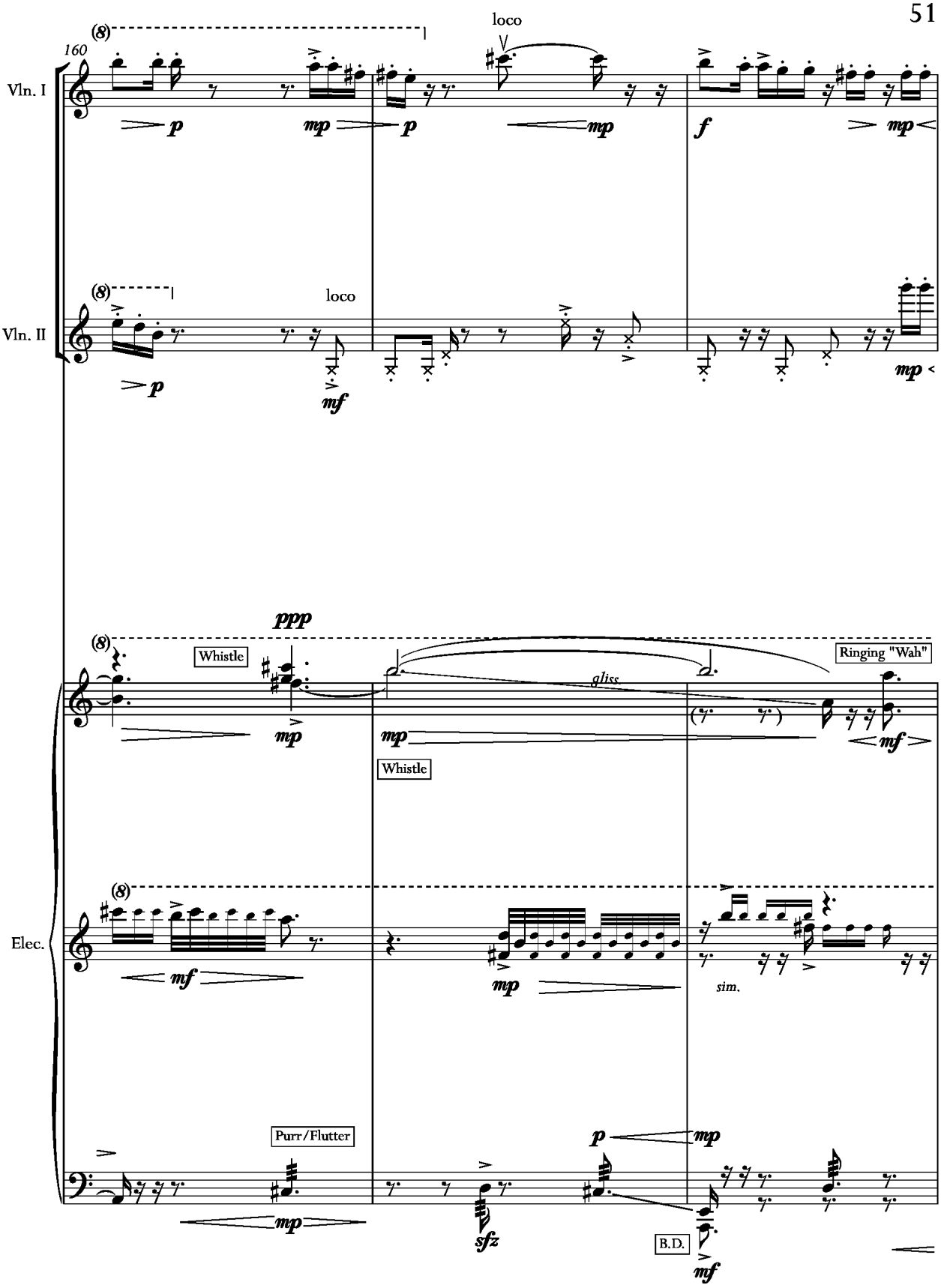
(8:07)

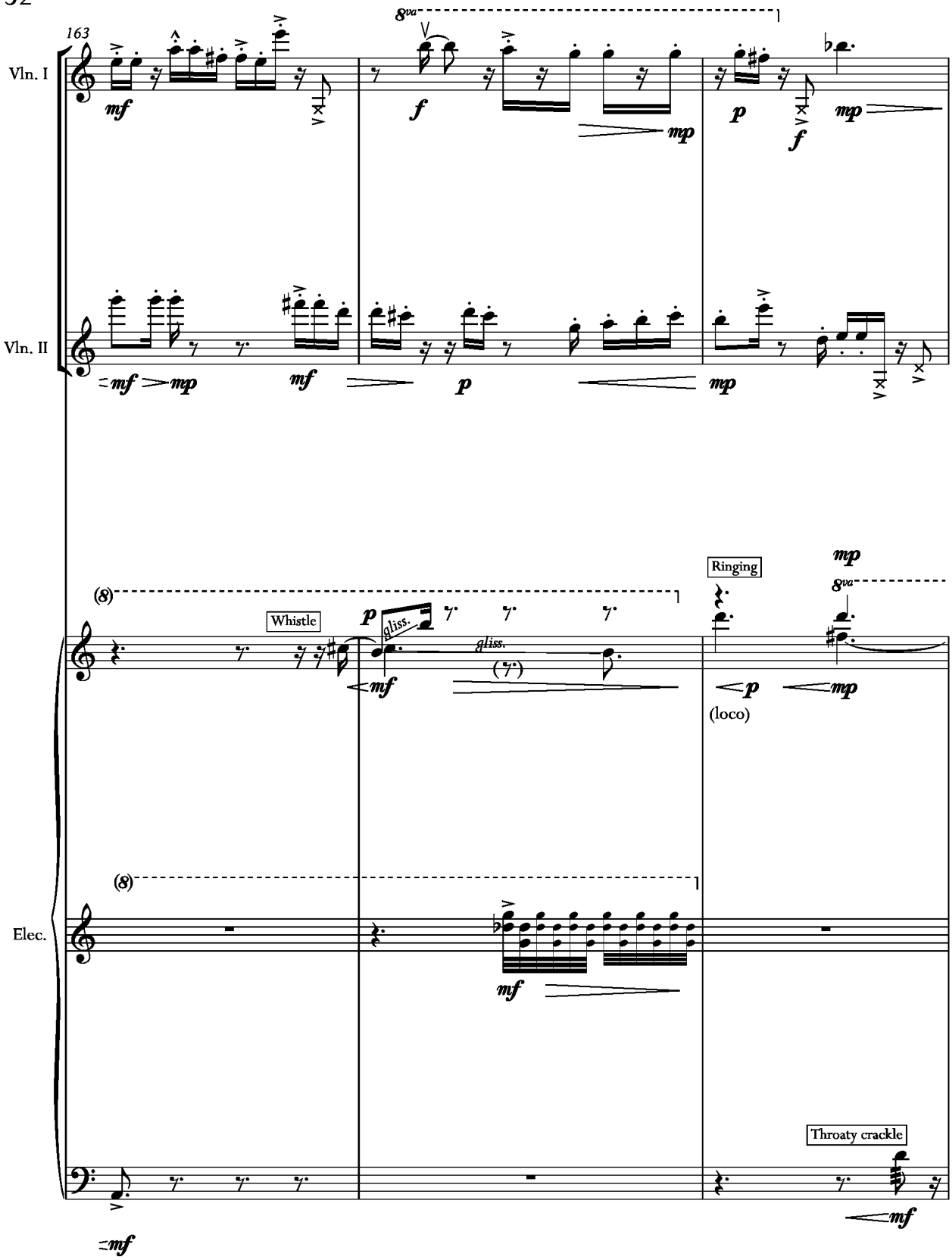
Electronic Interlude (44")

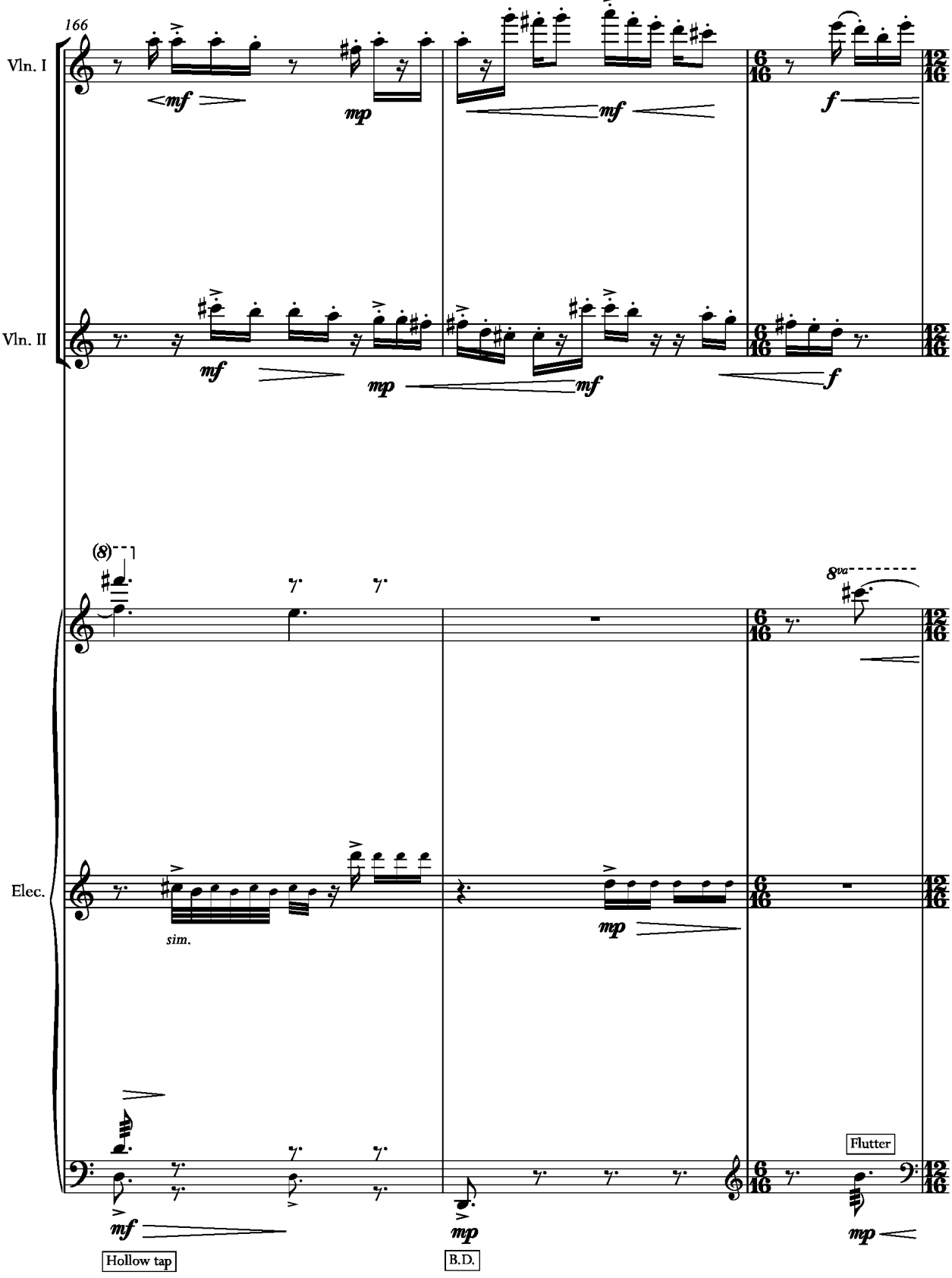


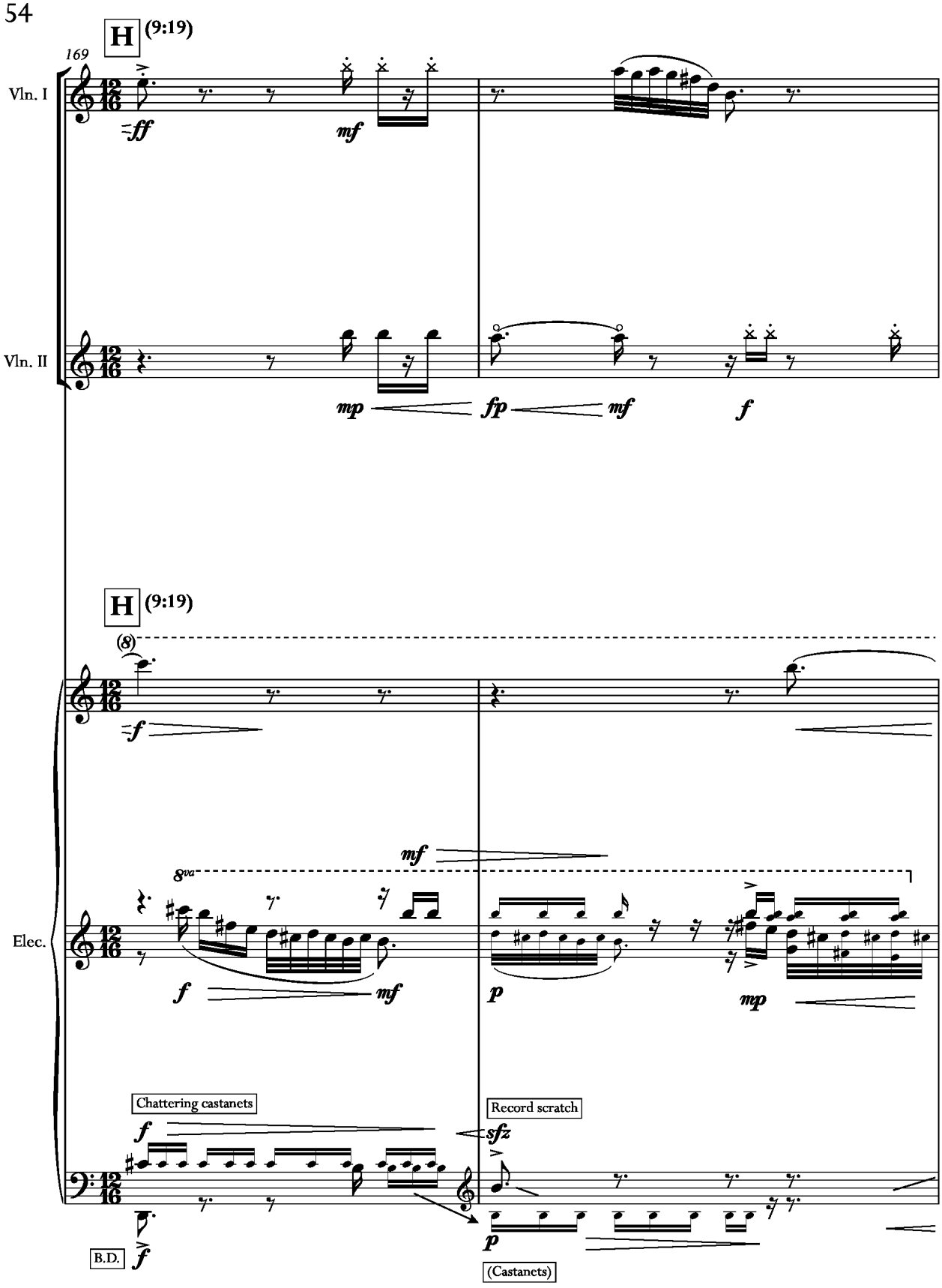

G
(8:50)
Scherzando
♪.=120
154
Vln. I
Vln. II
x=col legno battuto
mf
Marimba-like sine ping
Solo
8va
Elec.
f
sim.
Flutter
sfz
p
*Cue-sized notes denote delay effect
156
8va
p
mf
mp
mf
mp
mp
Ringing
(8)
mf
mf
p
ppp
mf

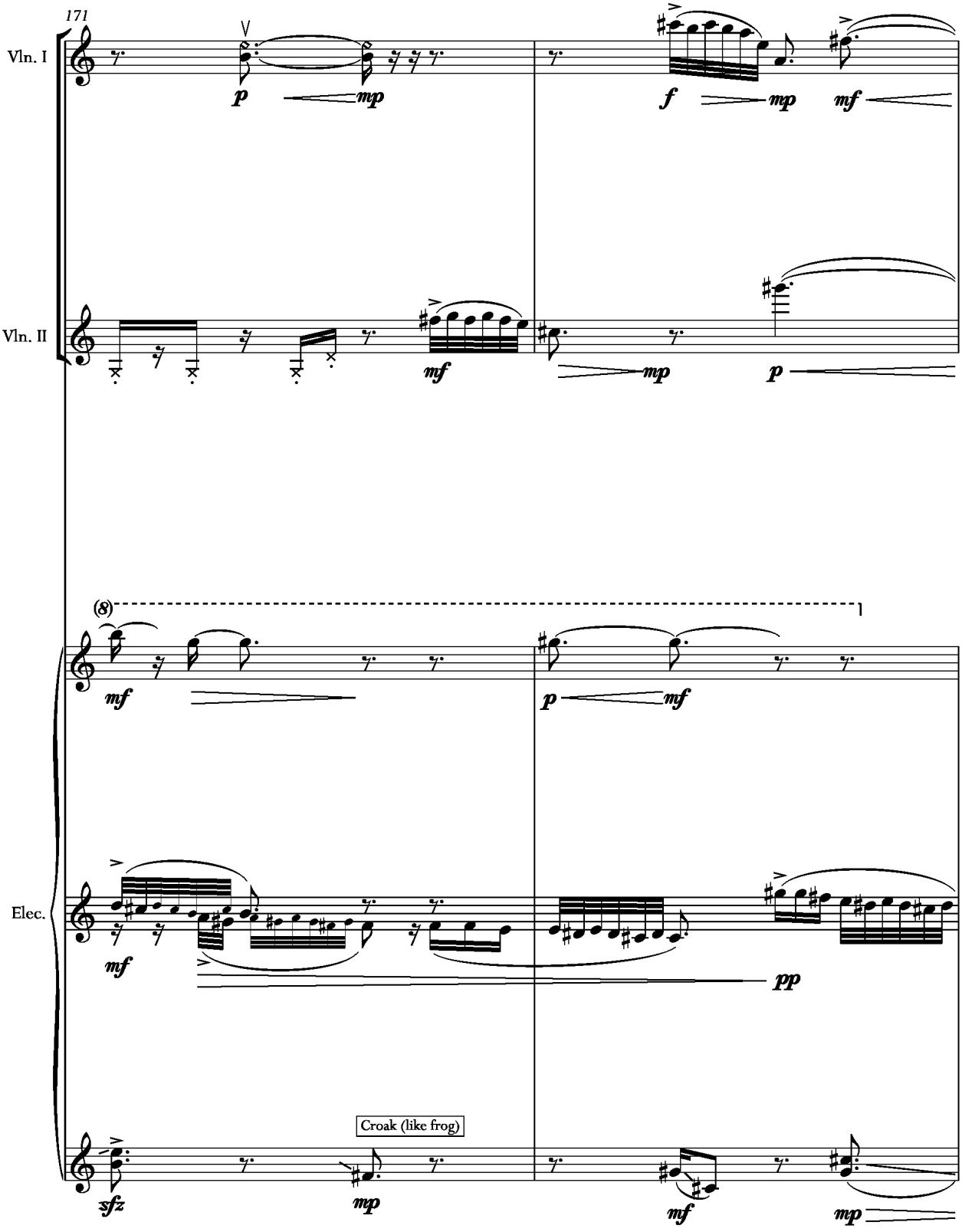

158
(8)
loco
x=col legno battuto
8va
Vln. I
Vln. II
Bowed Vibraphone
Elec.
Bass drum

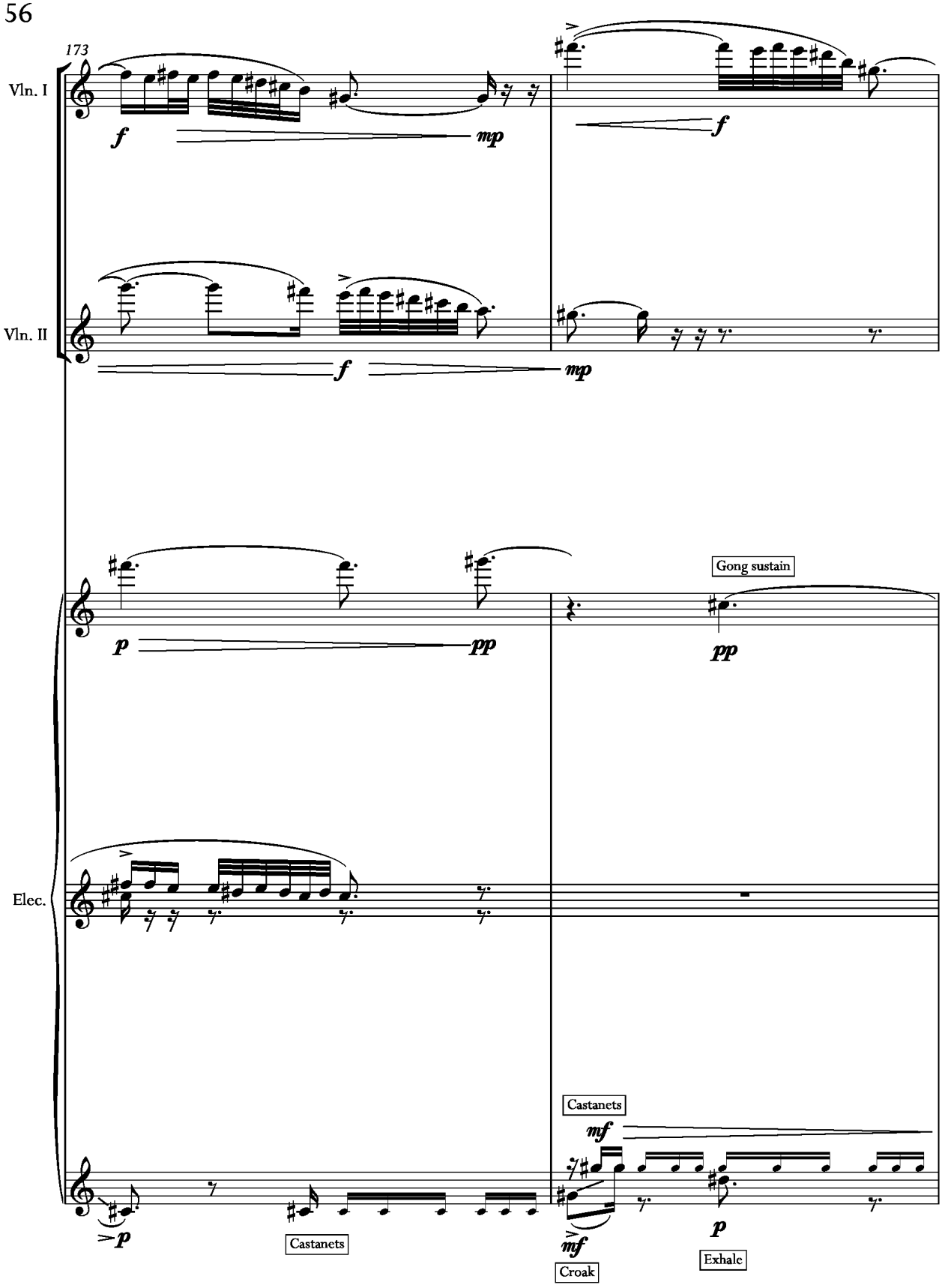

160
Vln. I
Vln. II
Elec.
loco
loco
Whistle
Whistle
Ringing "Wah"
gliss.
sim.
Purr/Flutter
B.D.

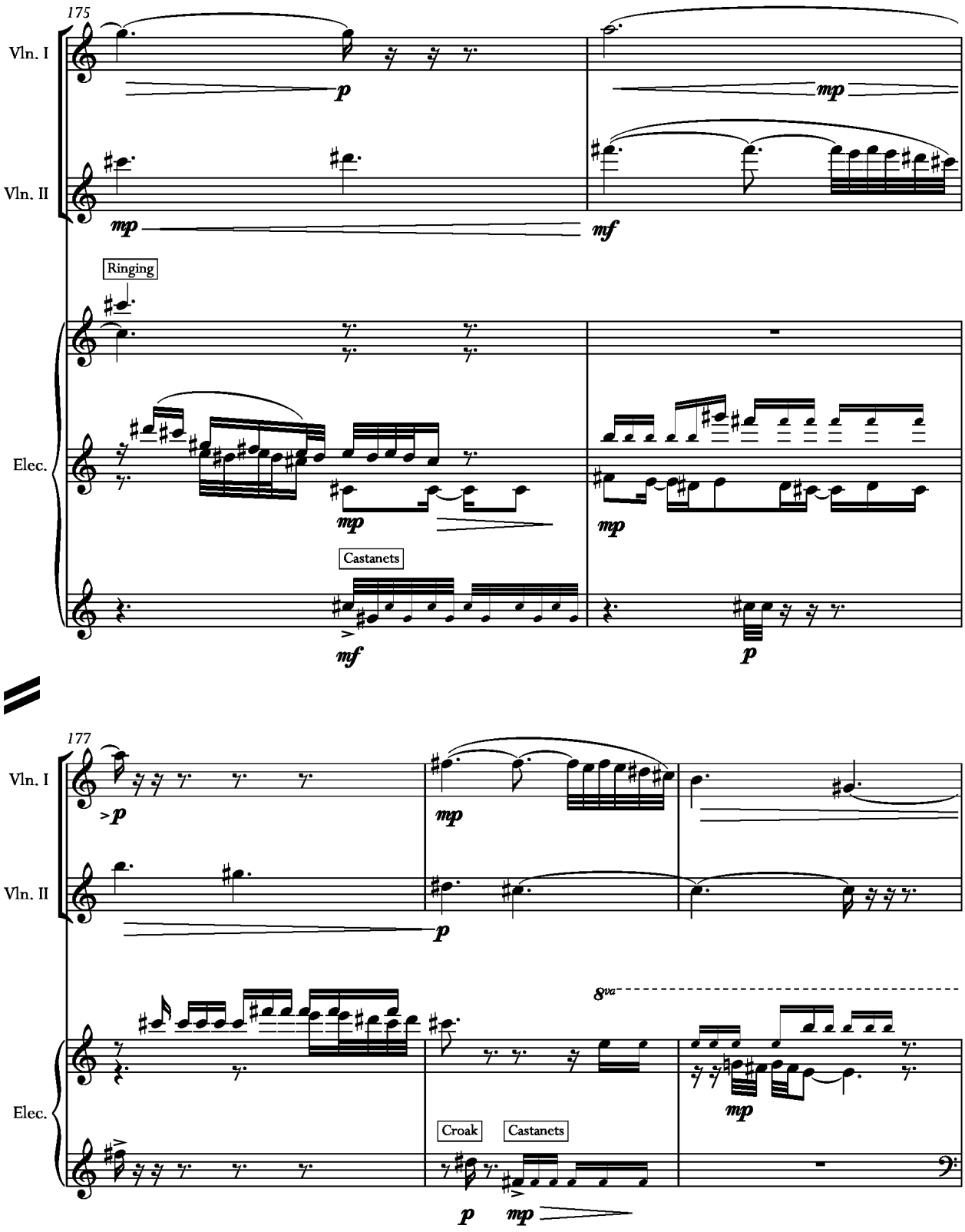

163
Vln. I
Vln. II
Elec.
8va
Whistle
gliss.
Ringing
(loco)
Throaty crackle

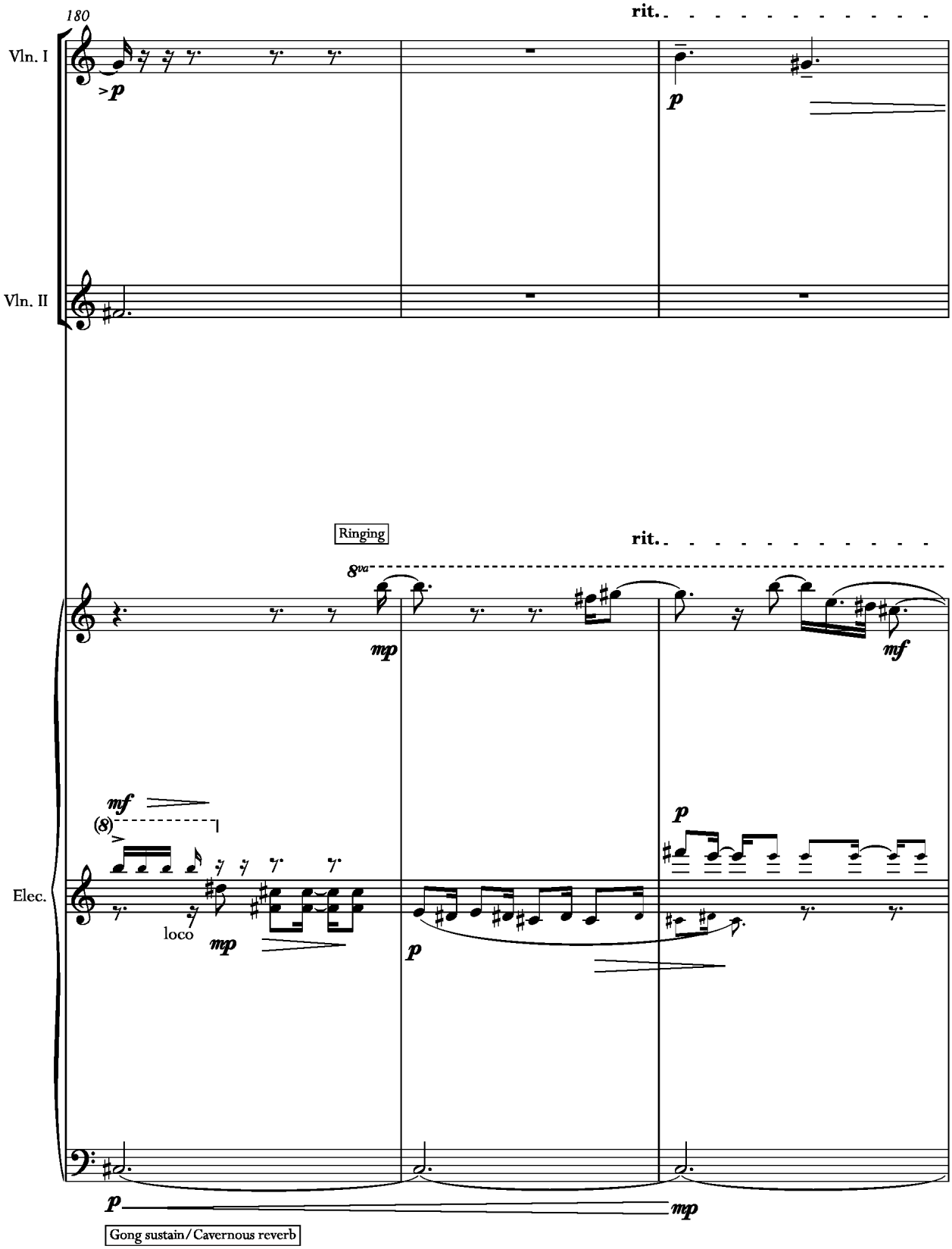

166
Vln. I
Vln. II
Elec.
(8)
8va
sim.
Hollow tap
B.D.
Flutter

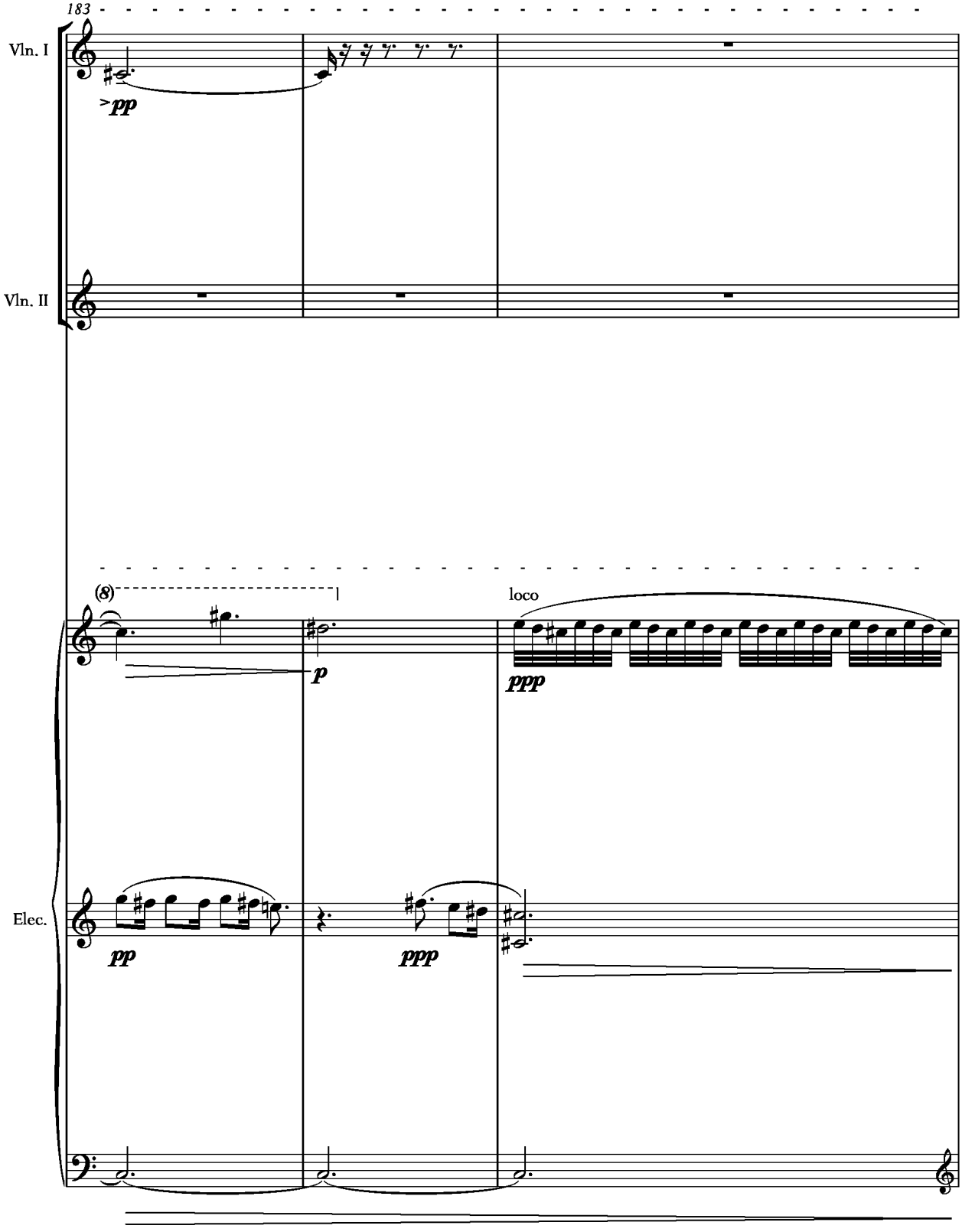

H (9:19)
169
Vln. I
Vln. II
ff
mf
mp
fp
mf
f
H (9:19)
(8)
f
Elec.
mf
8va
f
mf
p
mp
Chattering castanets
Record scratch
f
sfz
B.D.
f
p
(Castanets)

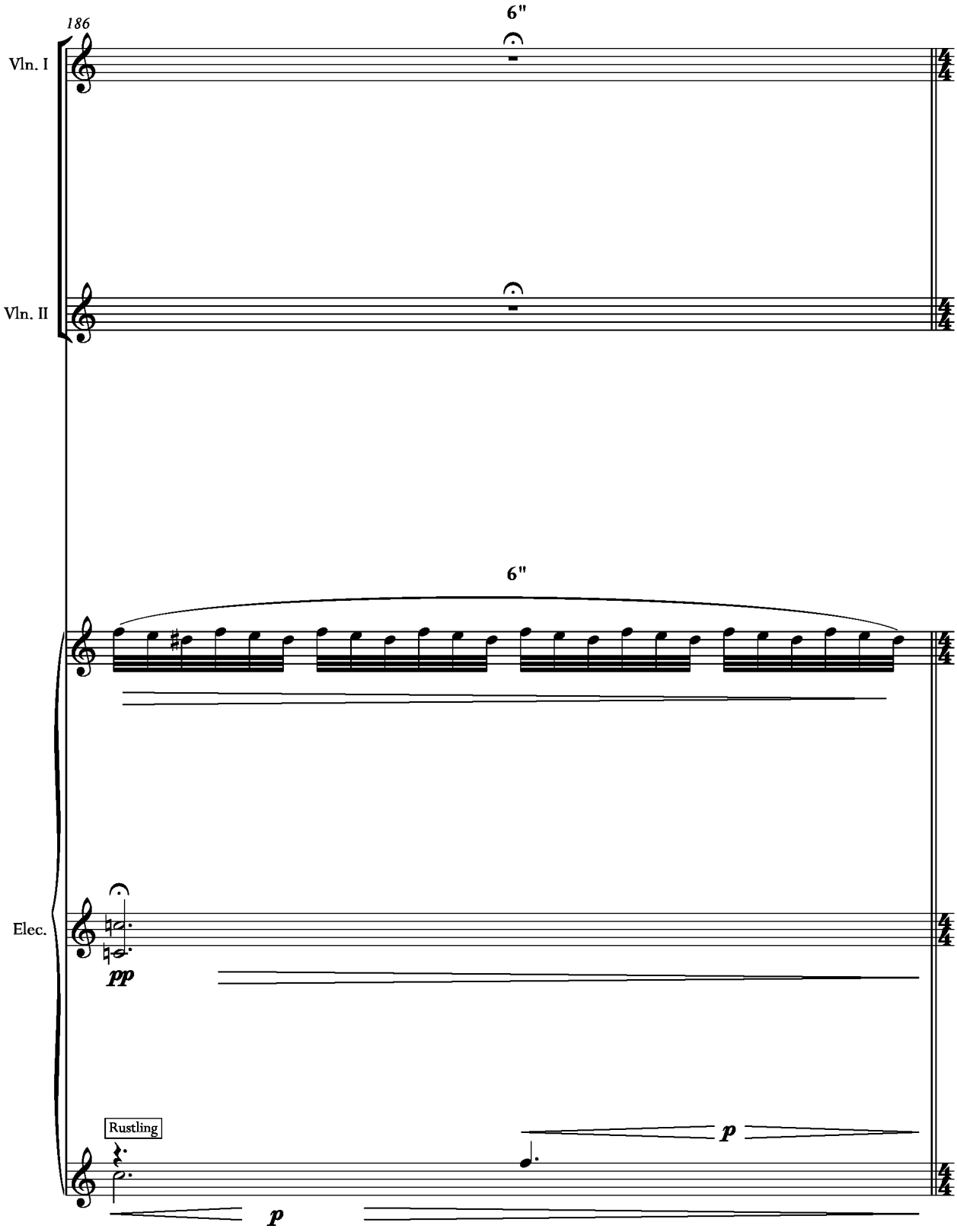

171
Vln. I
Vln. II
Elec.
(8)
1
Croak (like frog)

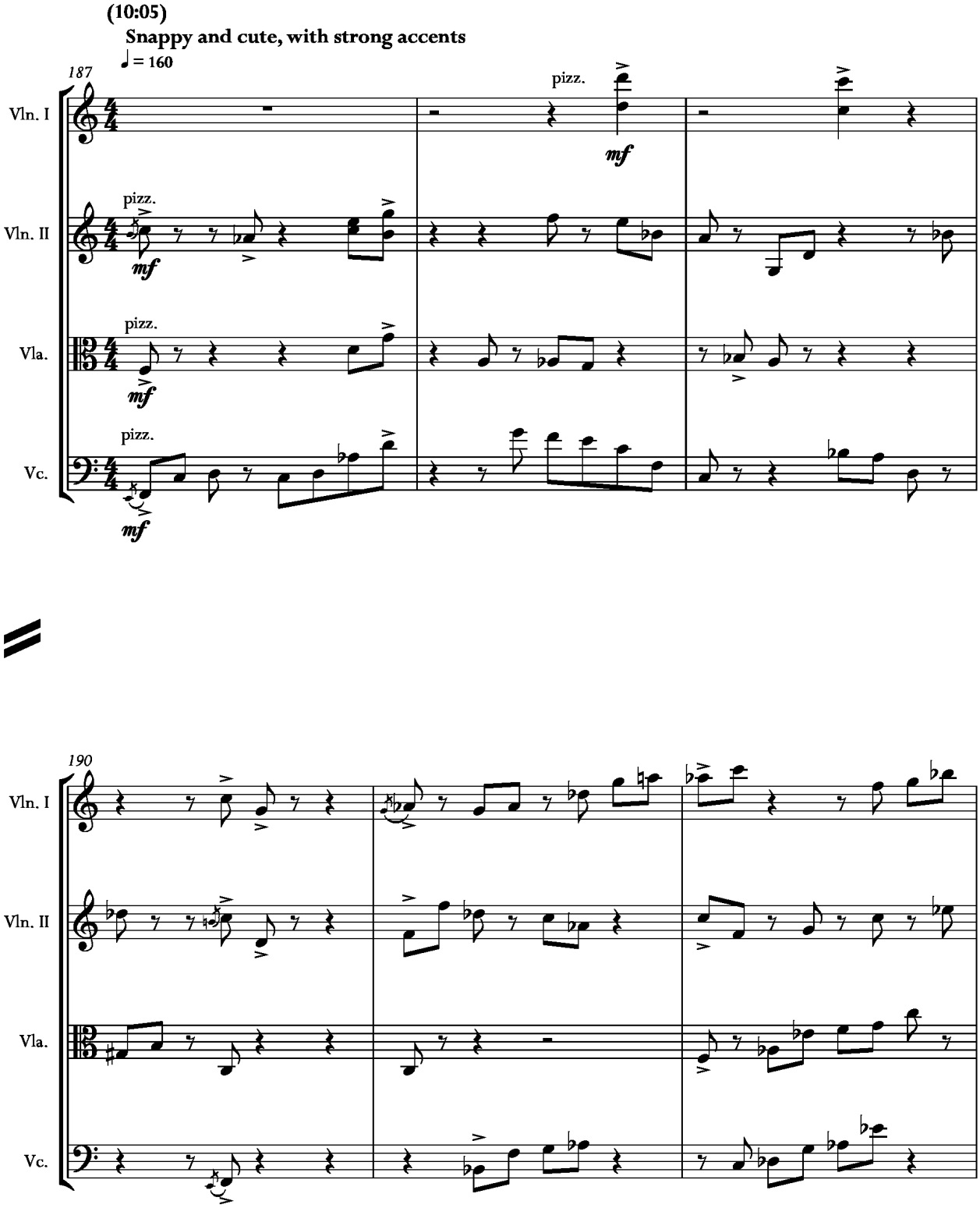

173
Vln. I
Vln. II
Elec.
Gong sustain
Castanets
Castanets
Croak
Exhale

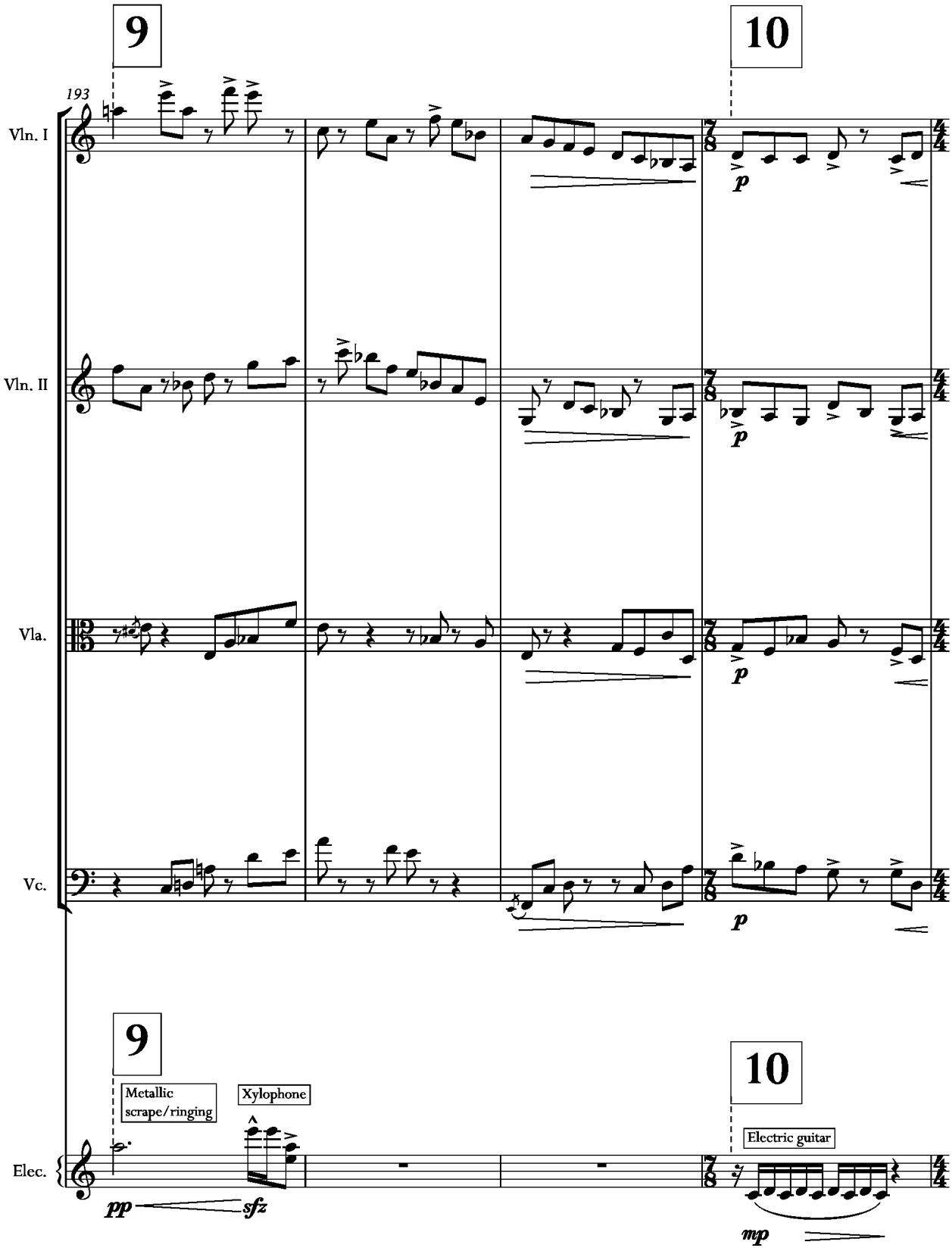

175
Vln. I
Vln. II
Elec.
Ringing
Castanets
177
Croak
Castanets
8va

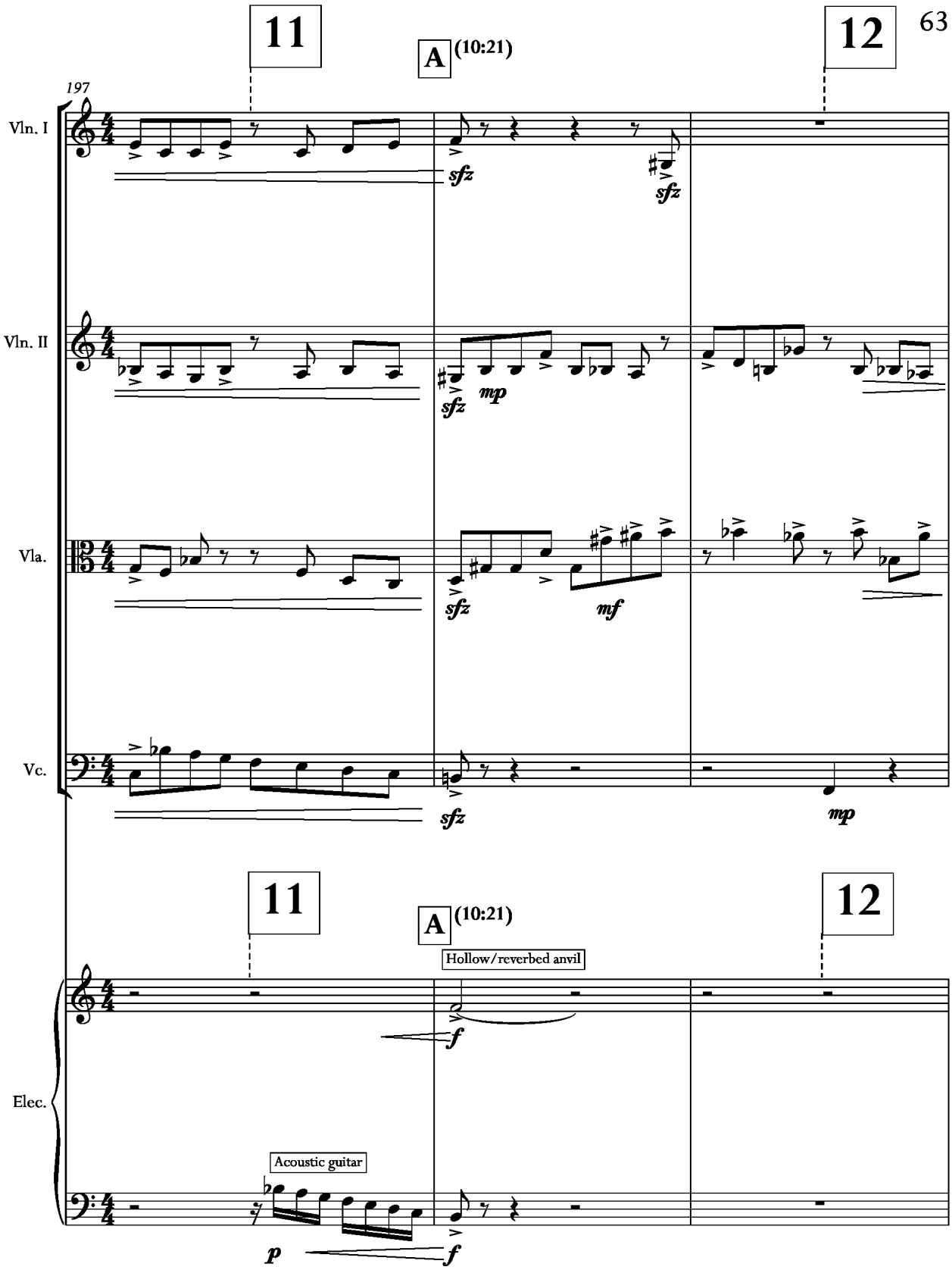

180
rit.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Ringing
rit.
8va
Elec.
loco
Gong sustain / Cavernous reverb

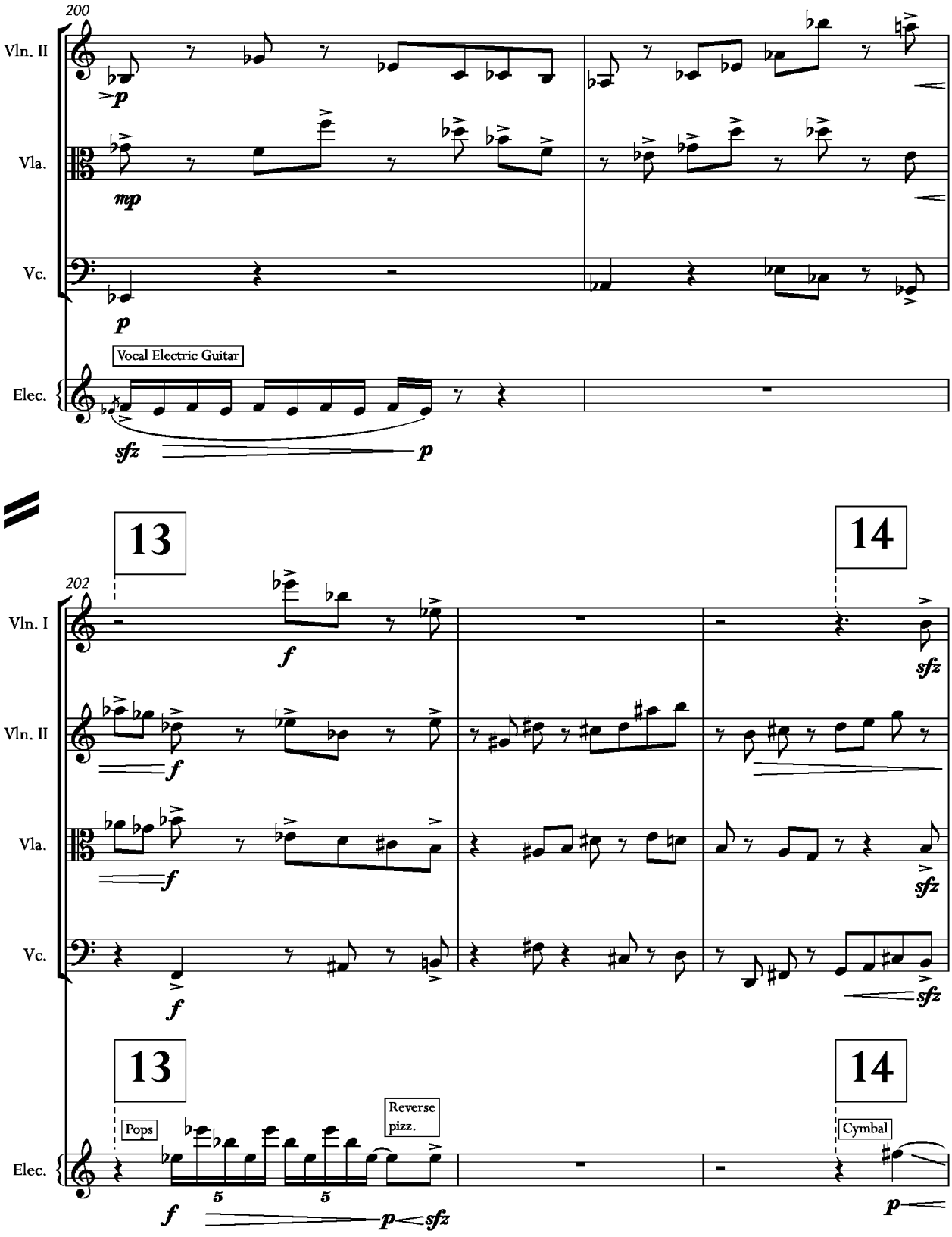

183
Vln. I
Vln. II
Elec.
>pp
(8)
p
loco
ppp
pp
ppp

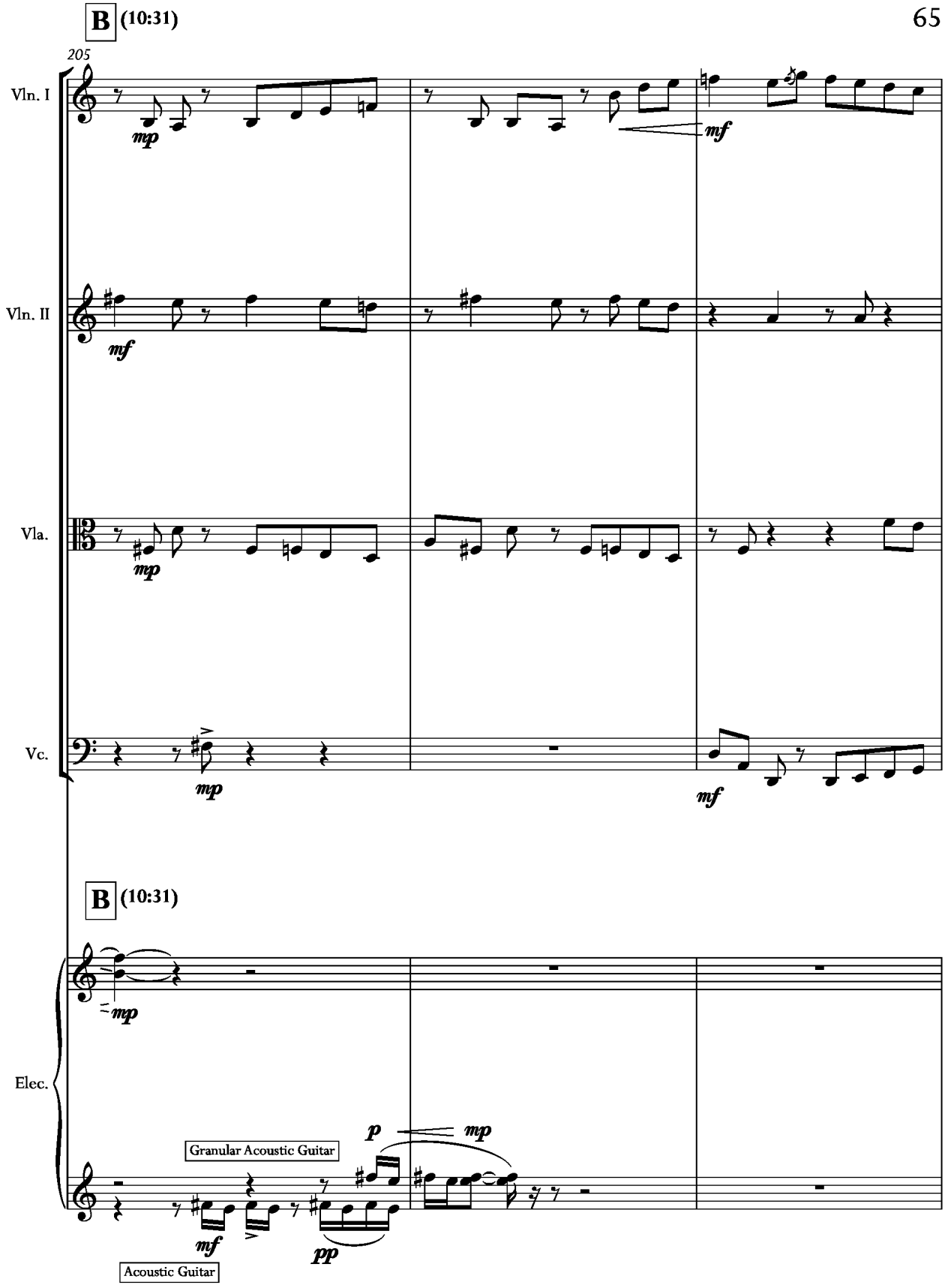

186
6"
Vln. I
Vln. II
6"
Elec.
pp
Rustling
p
p

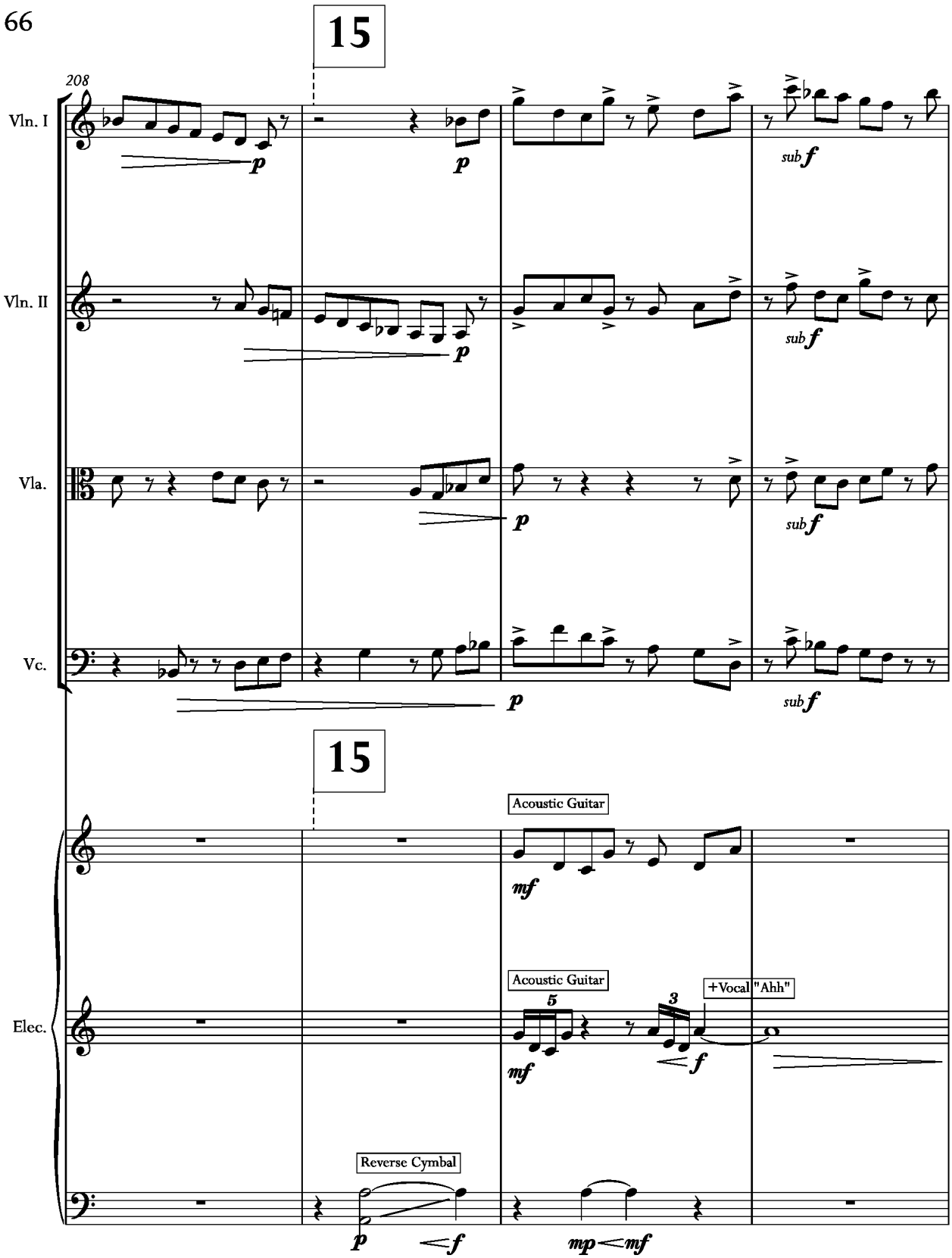

(10:05)
Snappy and cute, with strong accents
♩ = 160
187
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
pizz.
mf
190


9
10
193
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
p
9
10
Metallic scrape/ringing
Xylophone
Electric guitar
Elec.
pp
sfz
mp


11
A (10:21)
12
197
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
sfz
mp
mf
11
A (10:21)
12
Hollow/reverbed anvil
Elec.
Acoustic guitar
p
f


200
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Elec.
Vocal Electric Guitar
13
14
202
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Elec.
Pops
Reverse pizz.
Cymbal


B (10:31)
205
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
mp
mf
B (10:31)
Elec.
Granular Acoustic Guitar
Acoustic Guitar
p
pp


15
208
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
p
sub f
15
Acoustic Guitar
mf
Elec.
Acoustic Guitar
5
3
+Vocal "Ahh"
f
Reverse Cymbal
mp
mf

C

212

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

p

p

p

p

16

216

Vln. I

Vln. II

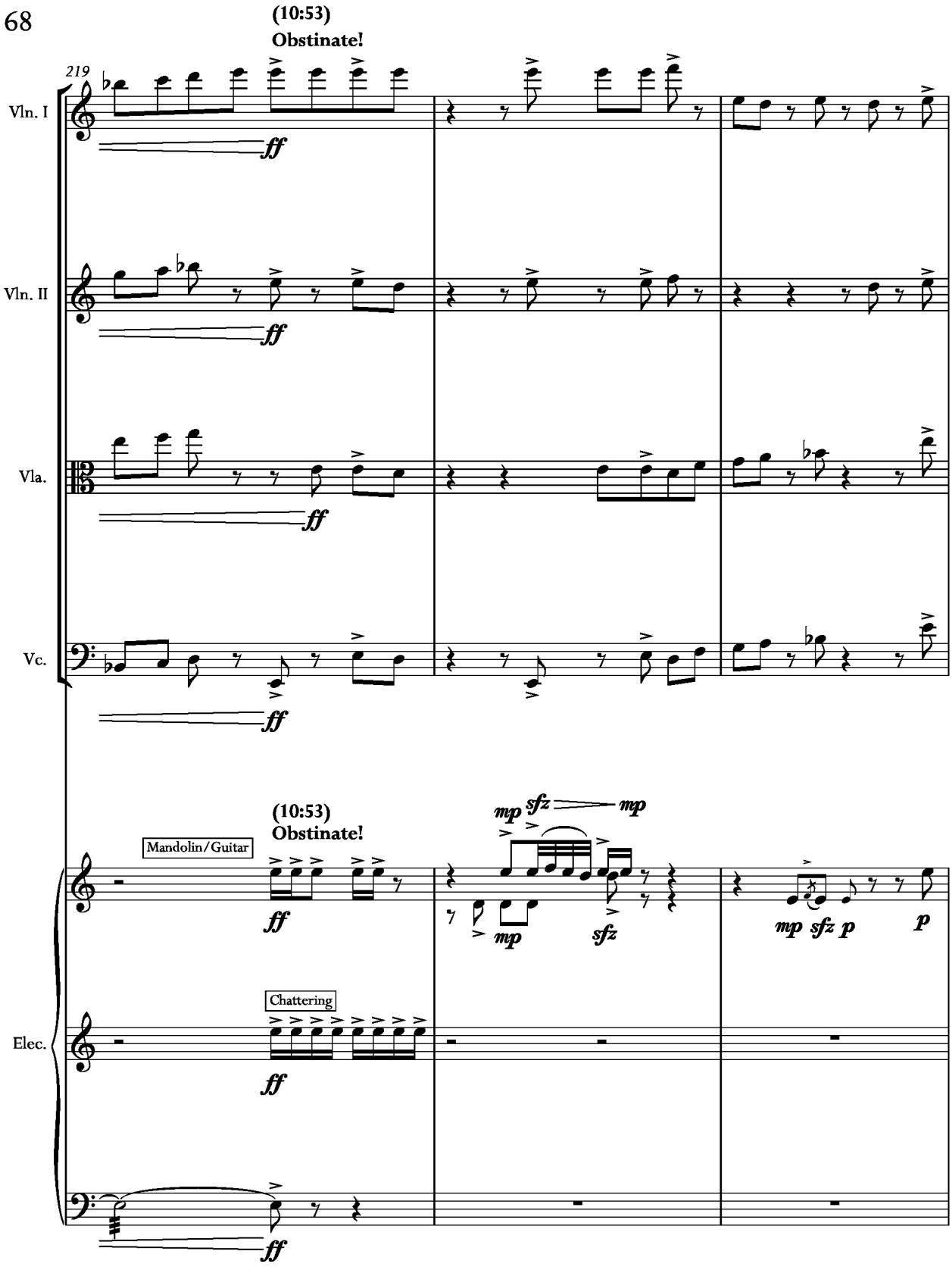
Vla.

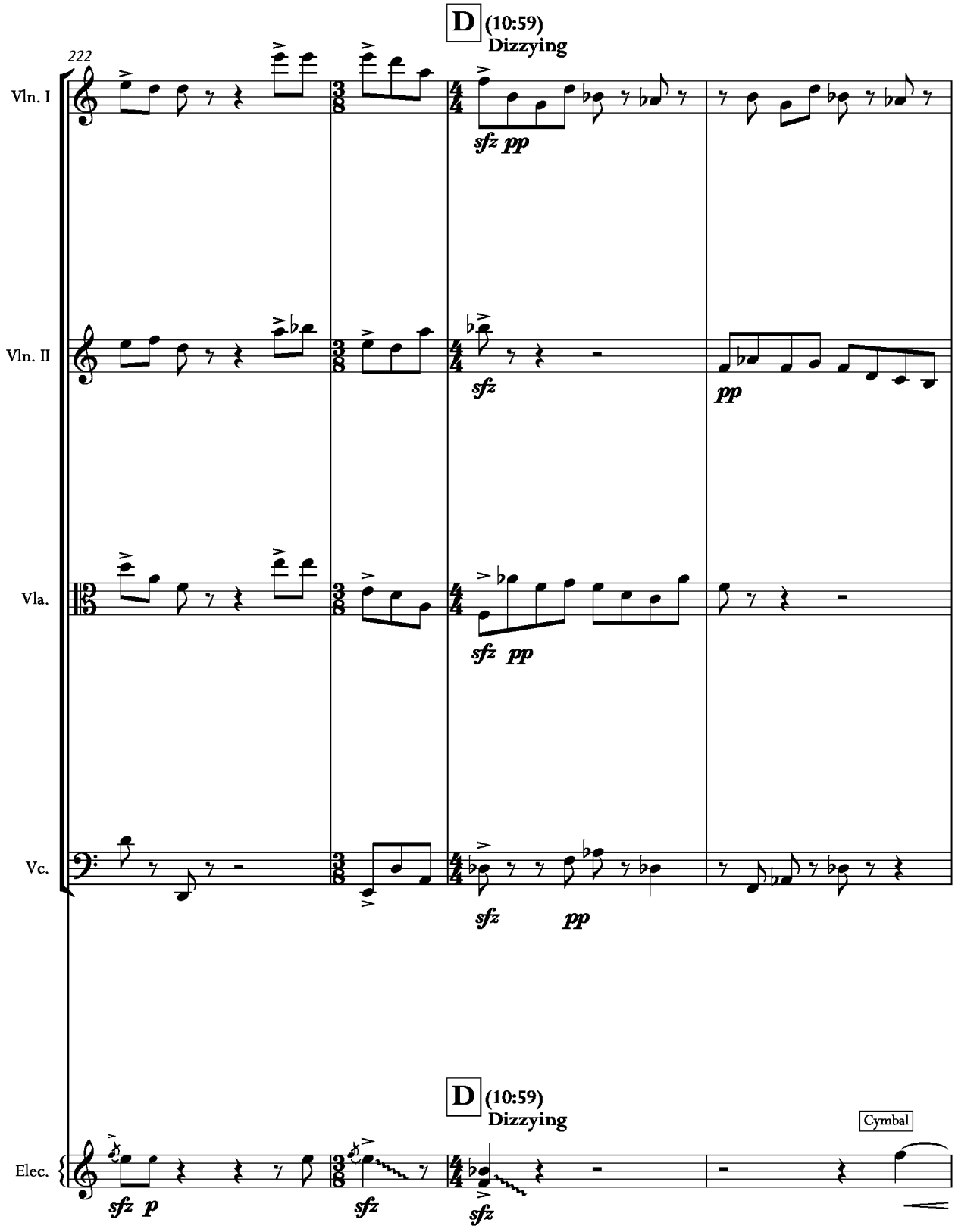
Vc.

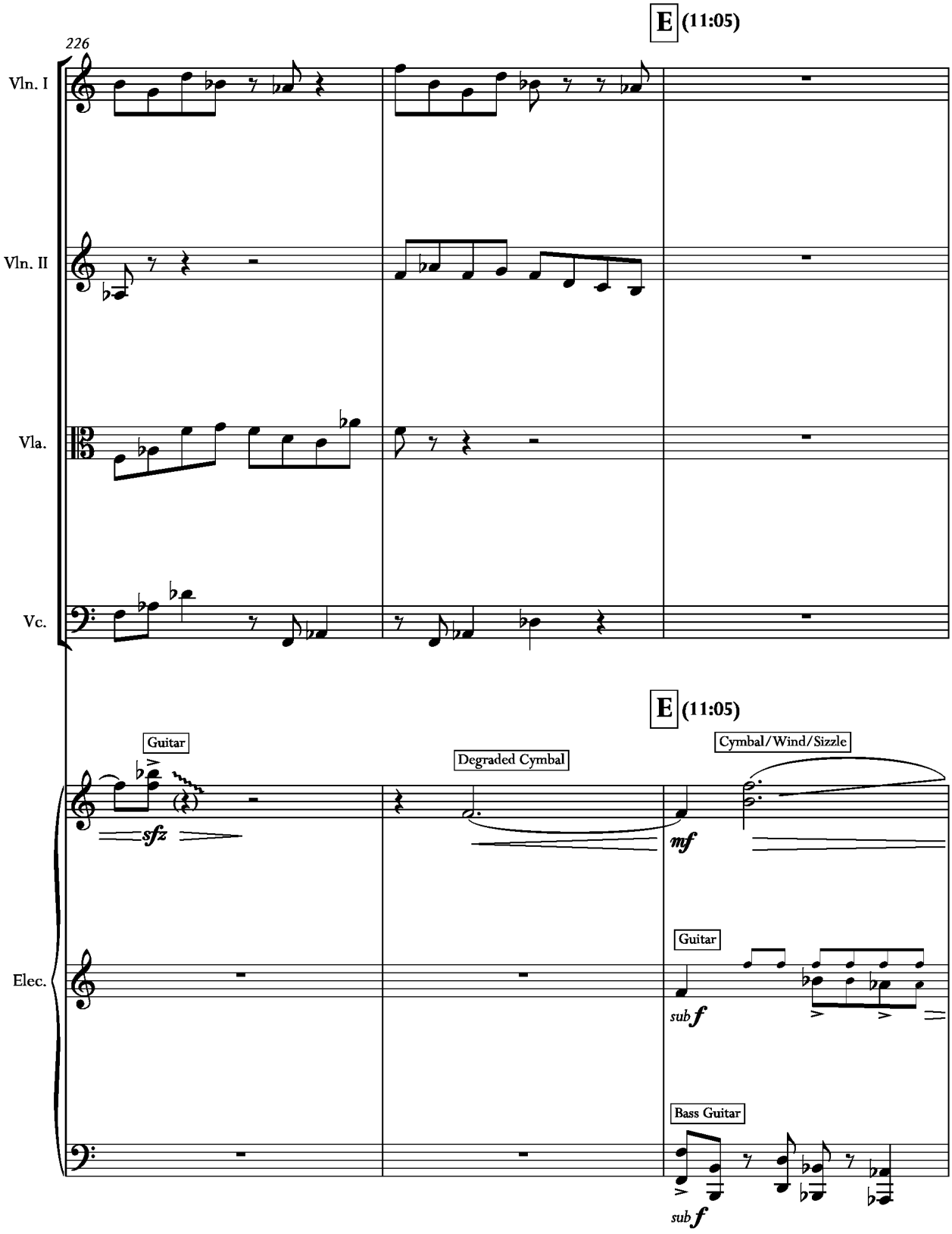
16

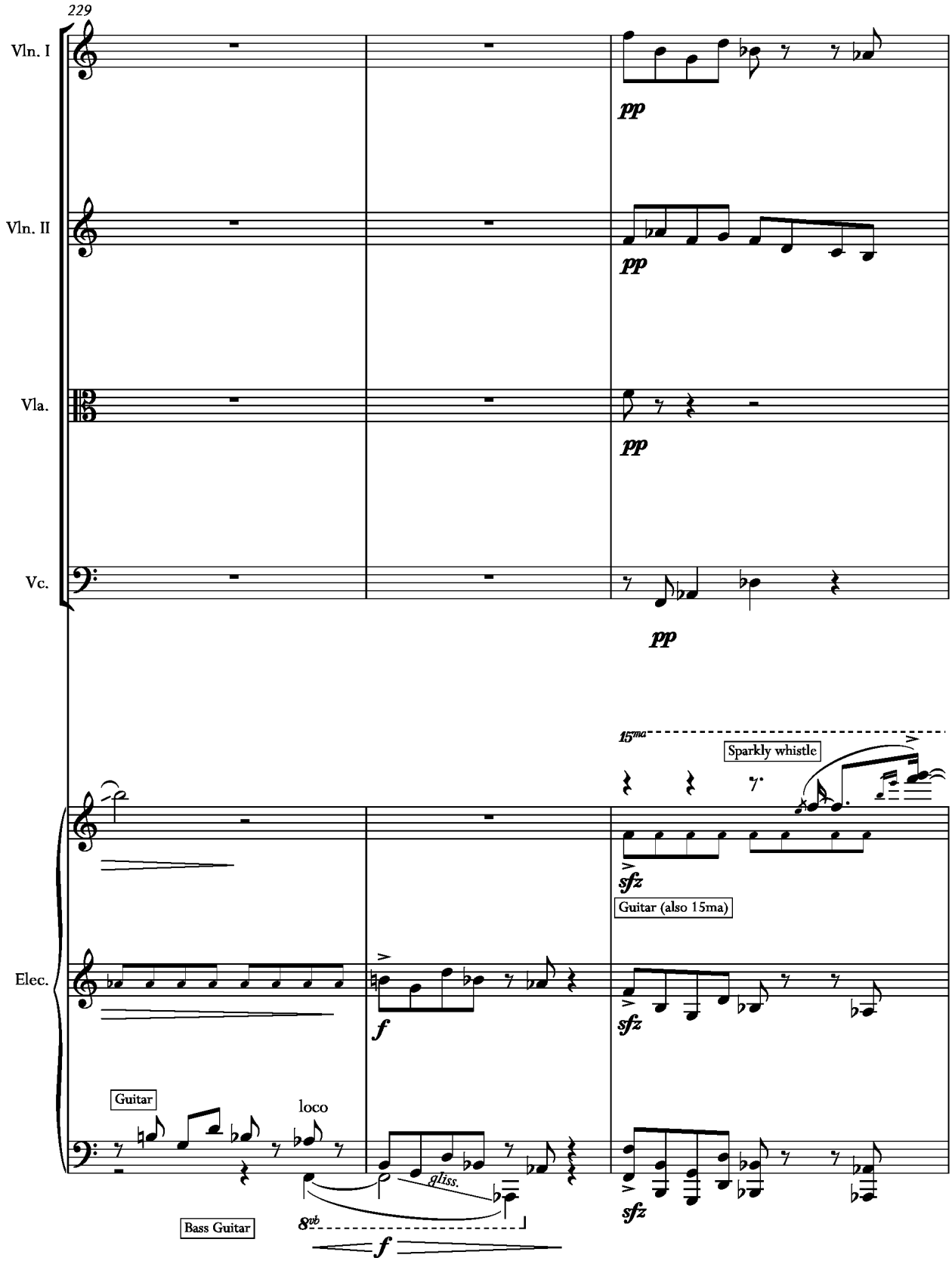
Elec.

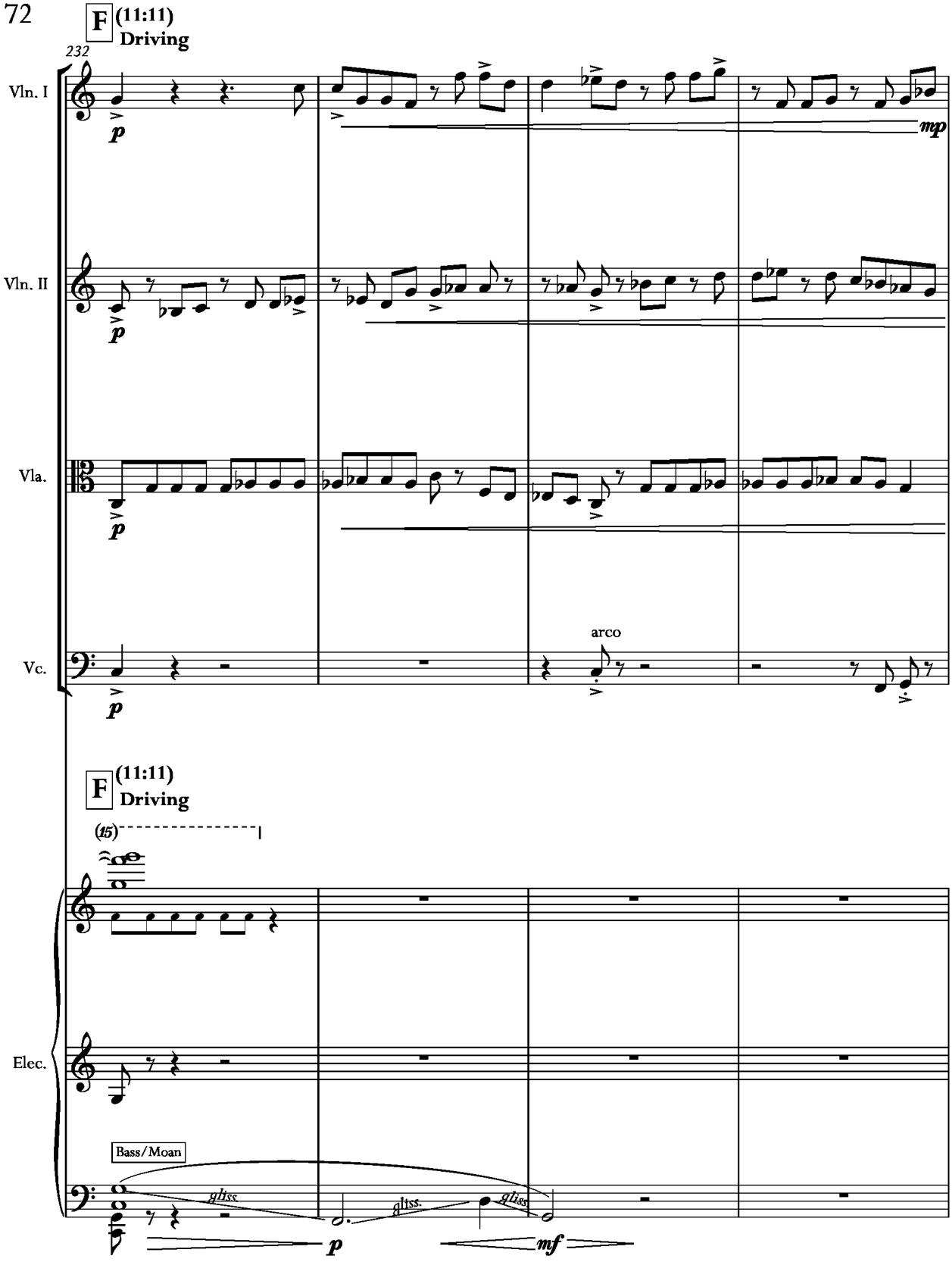
Bubbly rumble

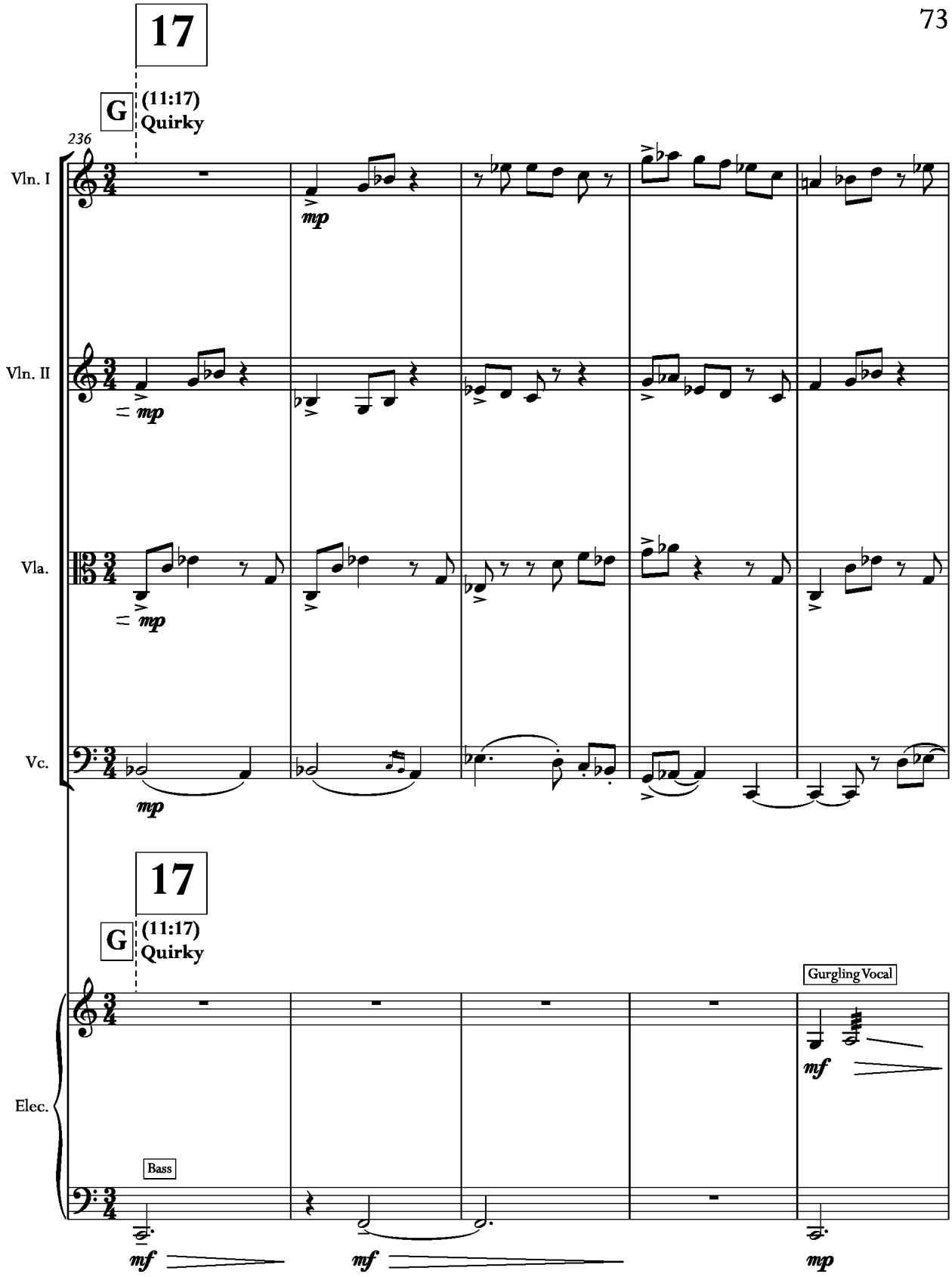

(10:53)
Obstinate!
219
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
ff
(10:53)
Obstinate!
Mandolin/Guitar
mp sfz mp
mp
sfz
mp sfz p
p
Chattering
Elec.

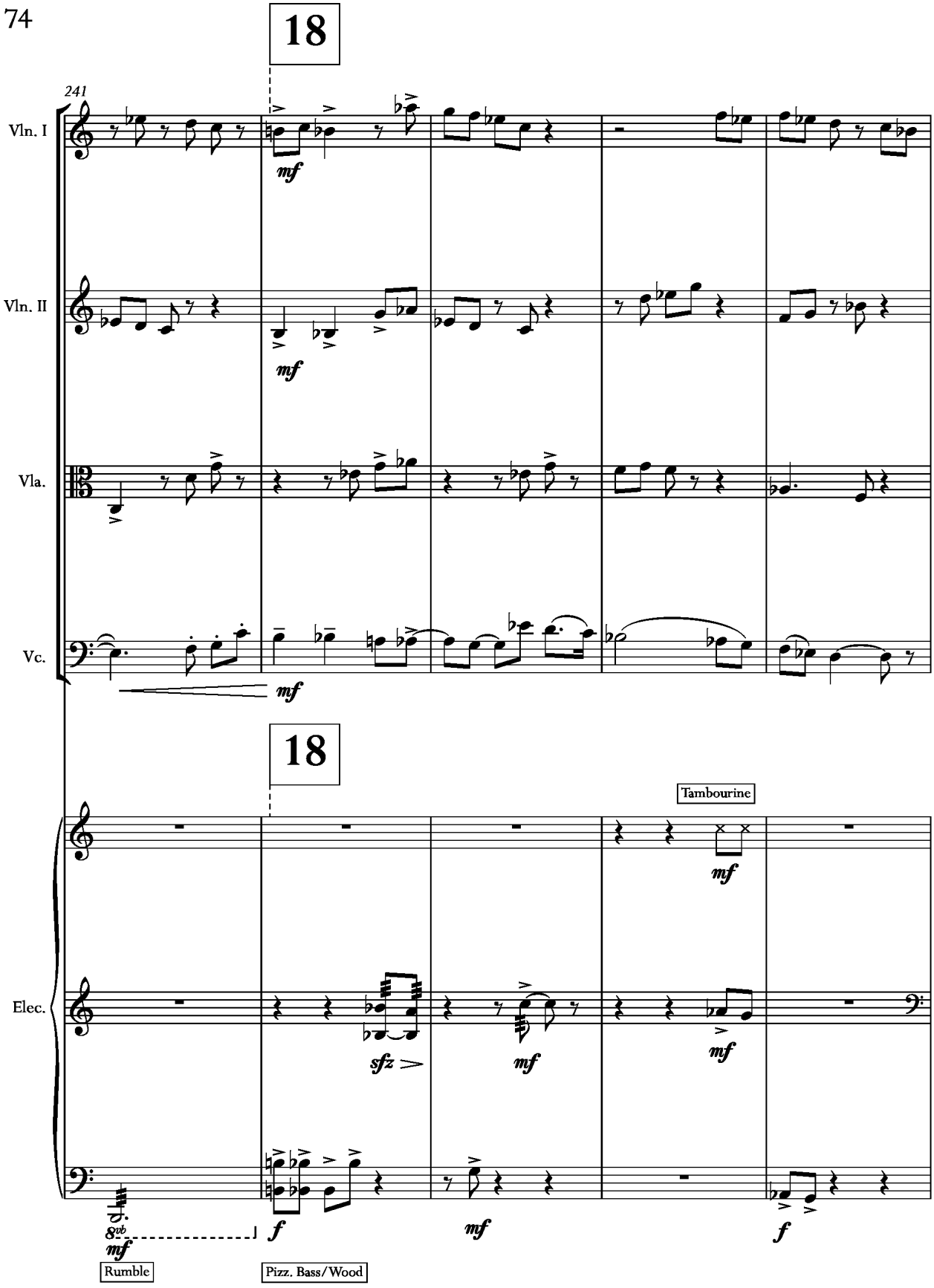

D (10:59)
Dizzying
222
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Elec.
sfz pp
sfz
pp
sfz pp
sfz pp
D (10:59)
Dizzying
Cymbal
sfz p
sfz
sfz

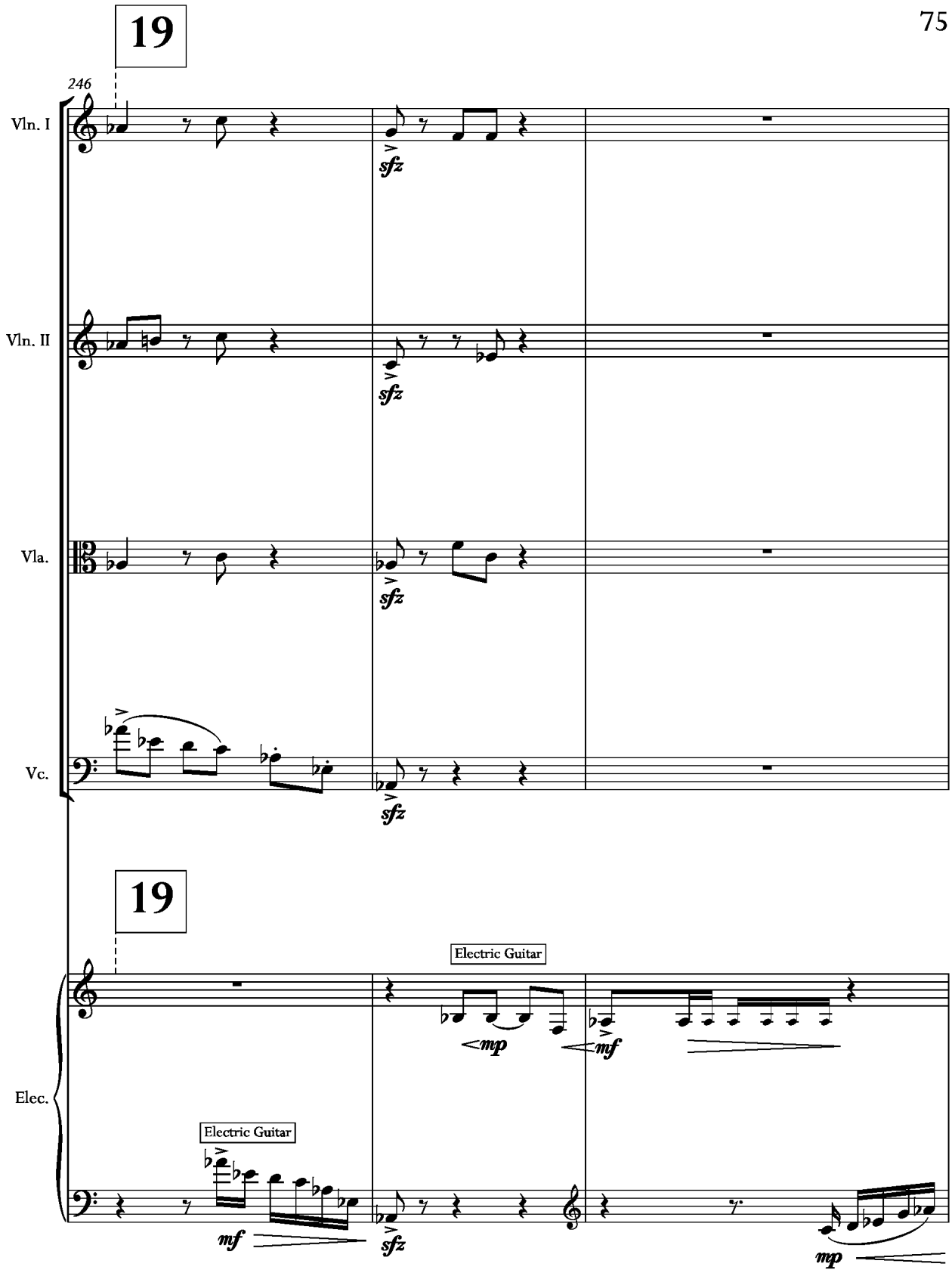

E (11:05)
226
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
E (11:05)
Guitar
Degraded Cymbal
Cymbal/Wind/Sizzle
sfz
mf
Elec.
Guitar
sub f
Bass Guitar
sub f

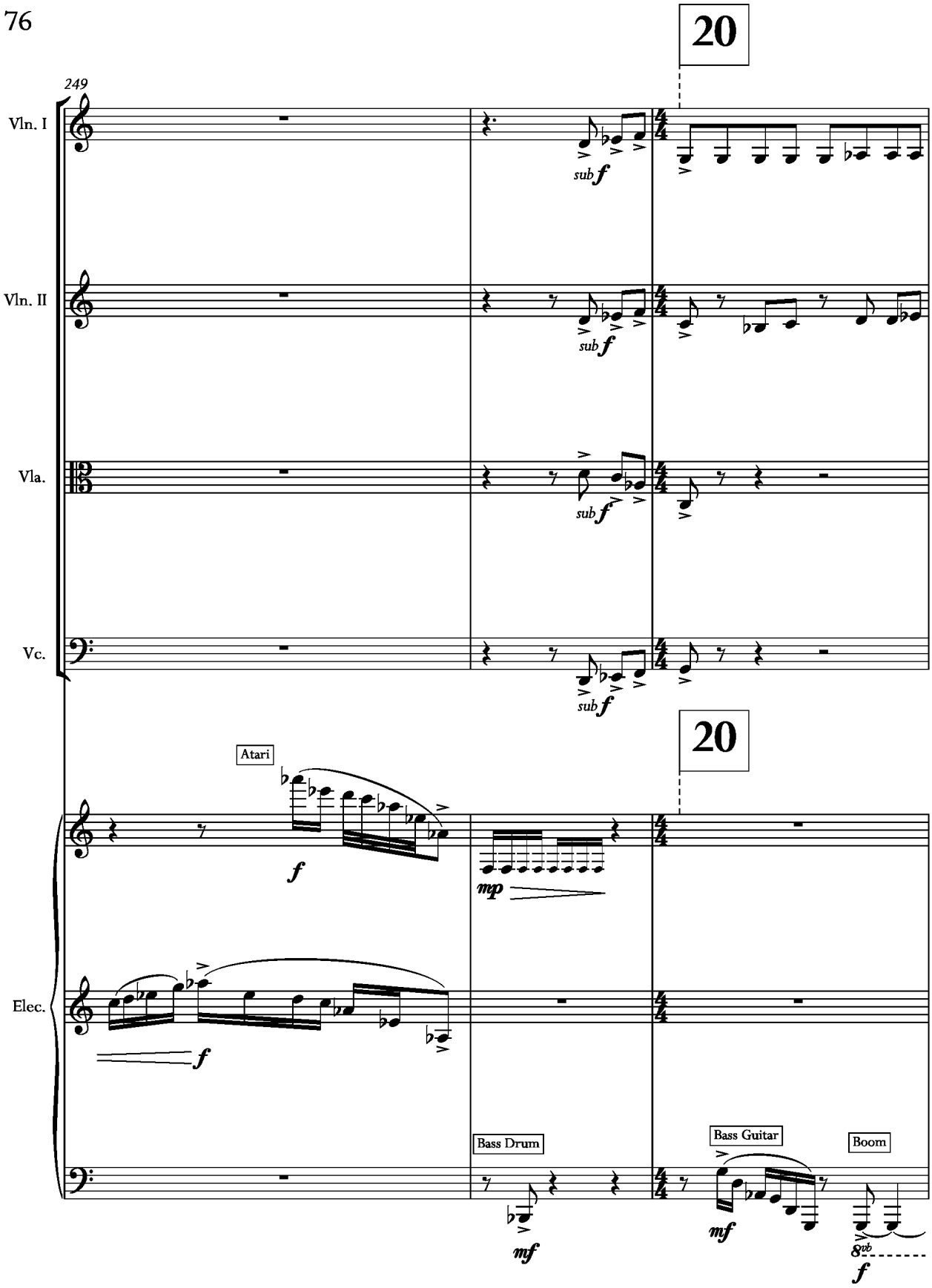

229
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Elec.
pp
pp
pp
pp
15ma
Sparkly whistle
sfz
Guitar (also 15ma)
sfz
f
Guitar
loco
gliss.
sfz
8vb
Bass Guitar
f

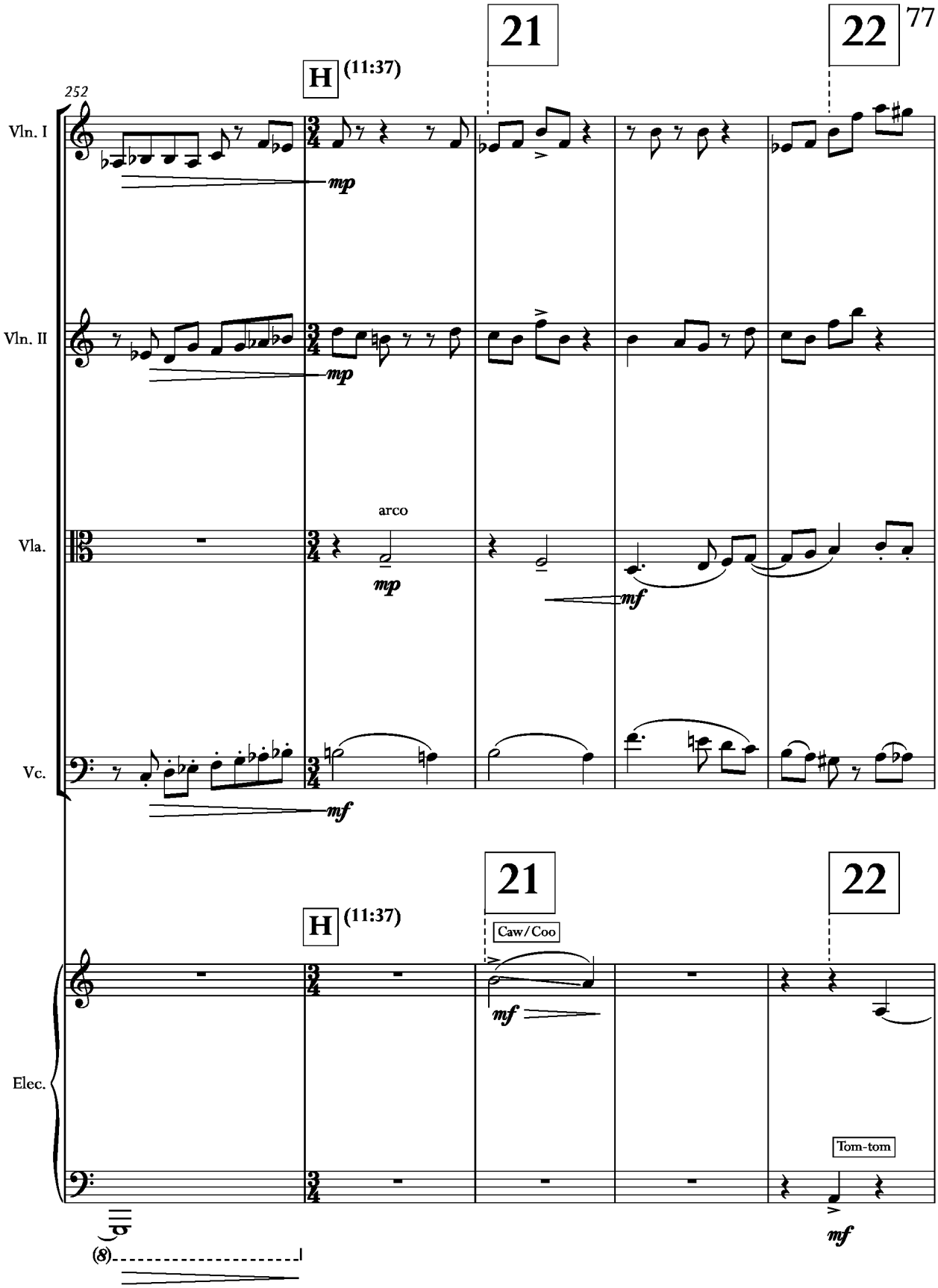

F (11:11)
Driving
232
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
arco
mp
F (11:11)
Driving
(15)
Elec.
Bass/Moan
gliss.
gliss.
gliss.
p
mf

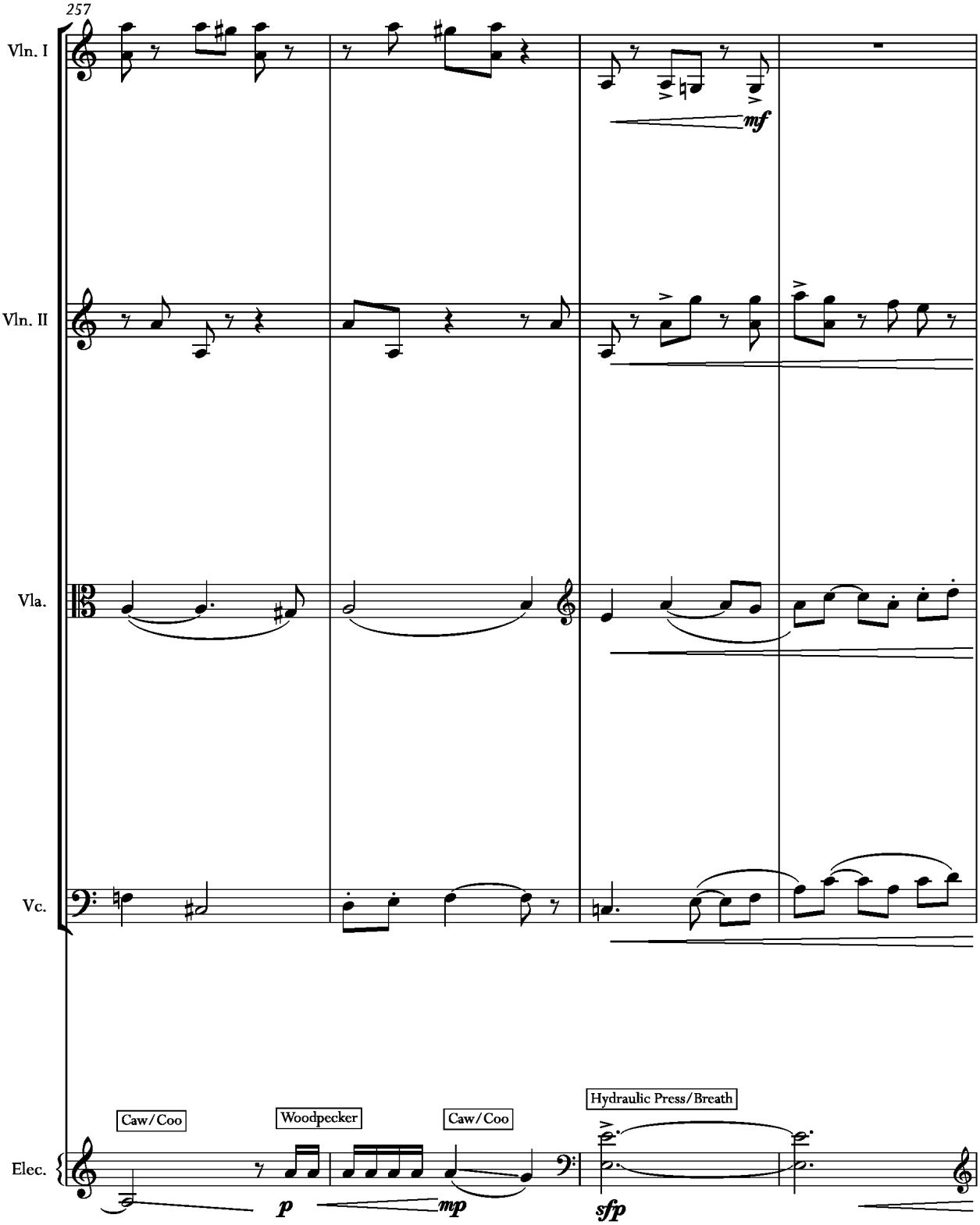

17
G
(11:17)
Quirky
236
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
mp
17
G
(11:17)
Quirky
Elec.
Gurgling Vocal
Bass
mf
mf
mf

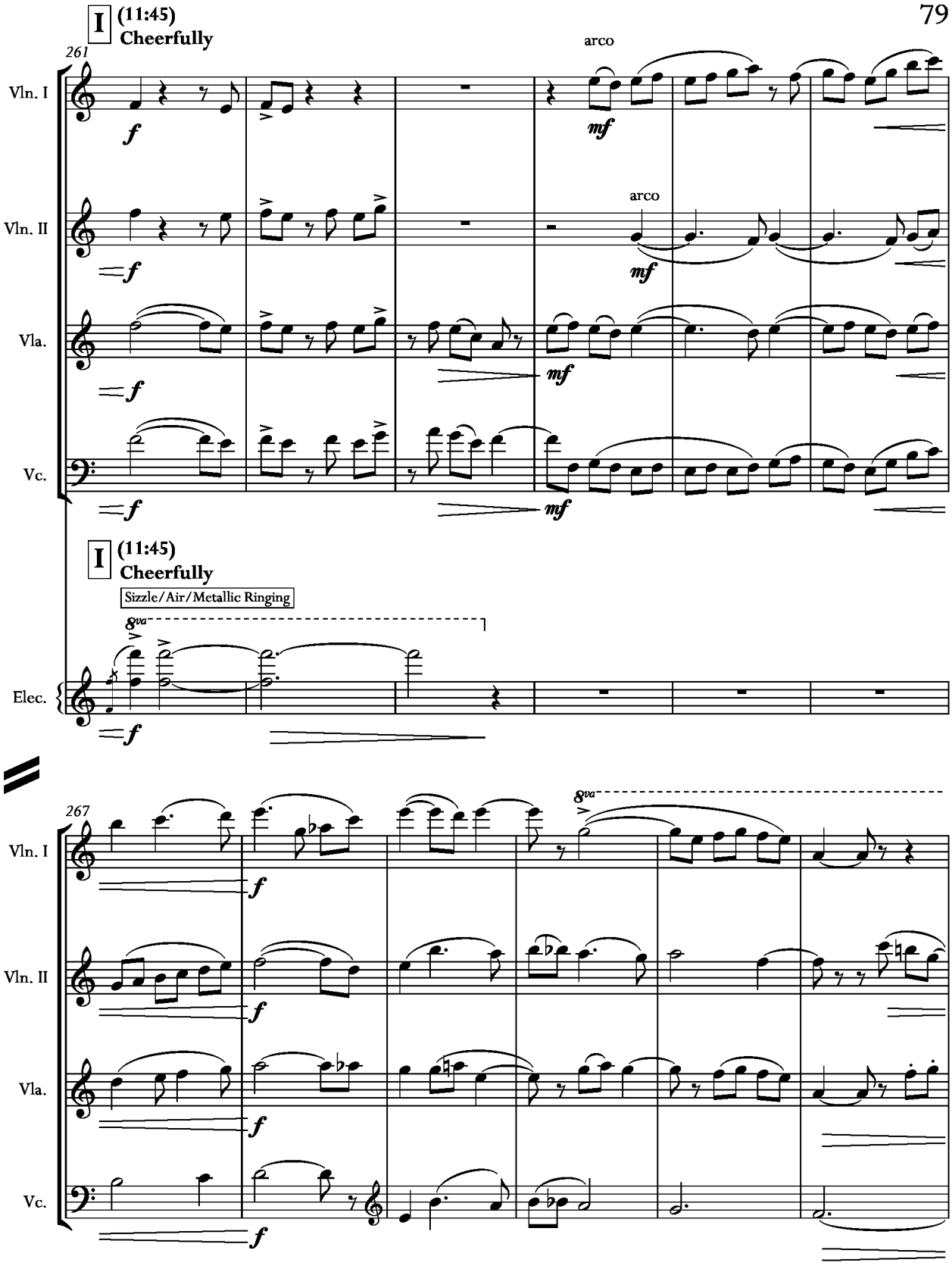

18
241
Vln. I
mf
Vln. II
mf
Vla.
Vc.
mf
18
Tambourine
mf
Elec.
sfz
mf
mf
8vb
mf
Rumble
f
Pizz. Bass/Wood
mf
f

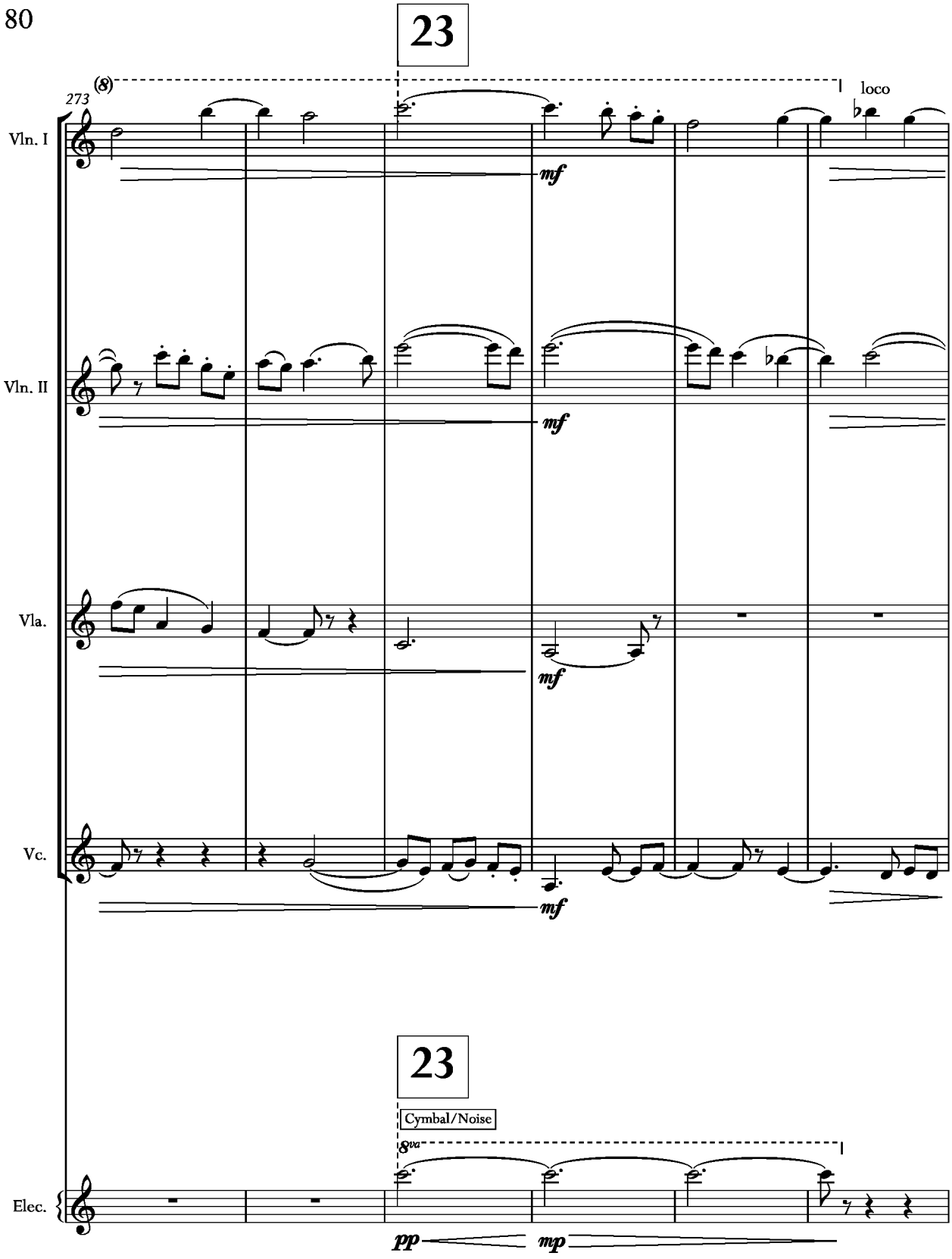

19
246
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
sfz
19
Elec.
Electric Guitar
mp
mf
Electric Guitar
mf
sfz
mp

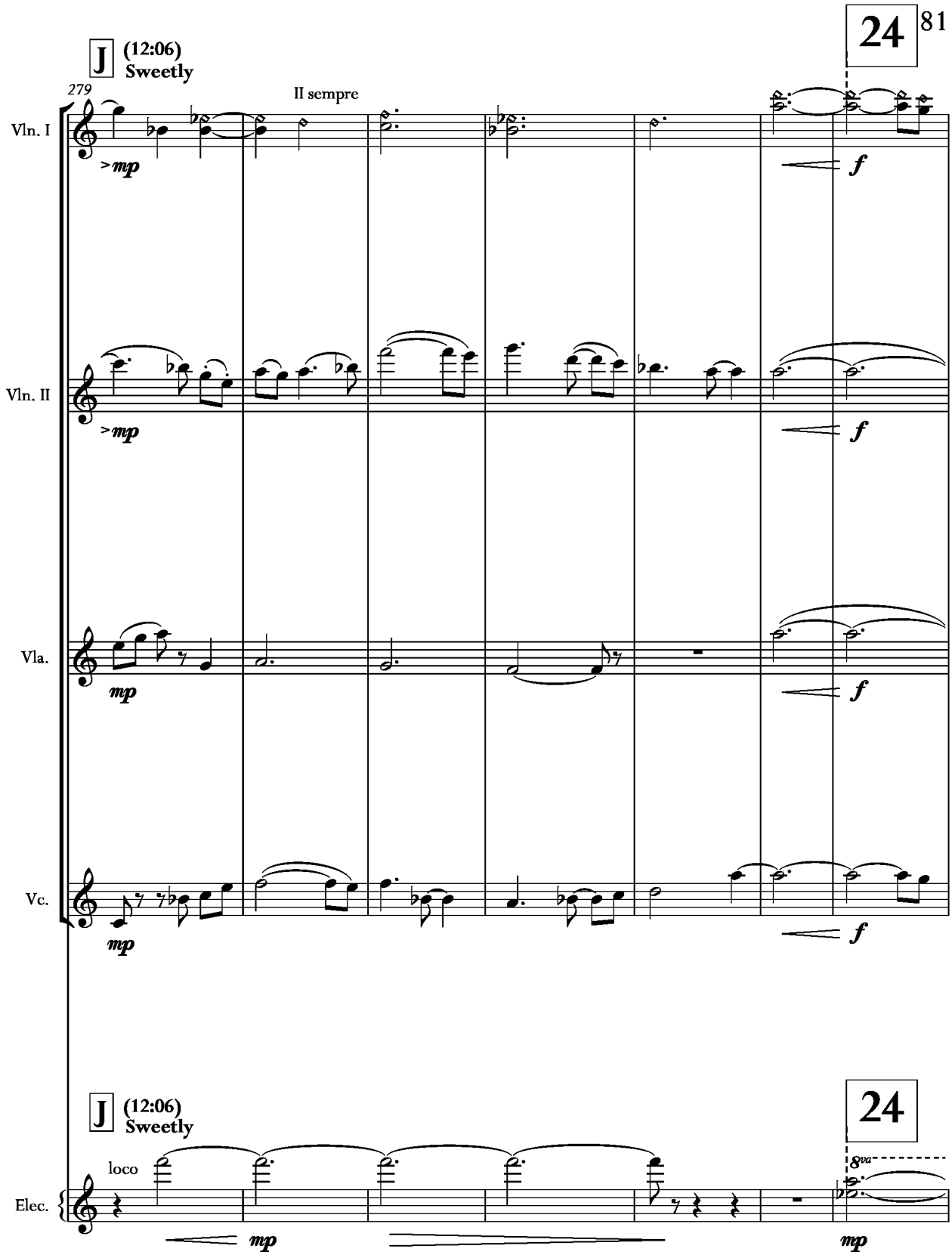

20
249
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
sub f
20
Atari
f
mp
Elec.
f
Bass Drum
mf
Bass Guitar
mf
Boom
8vb
f

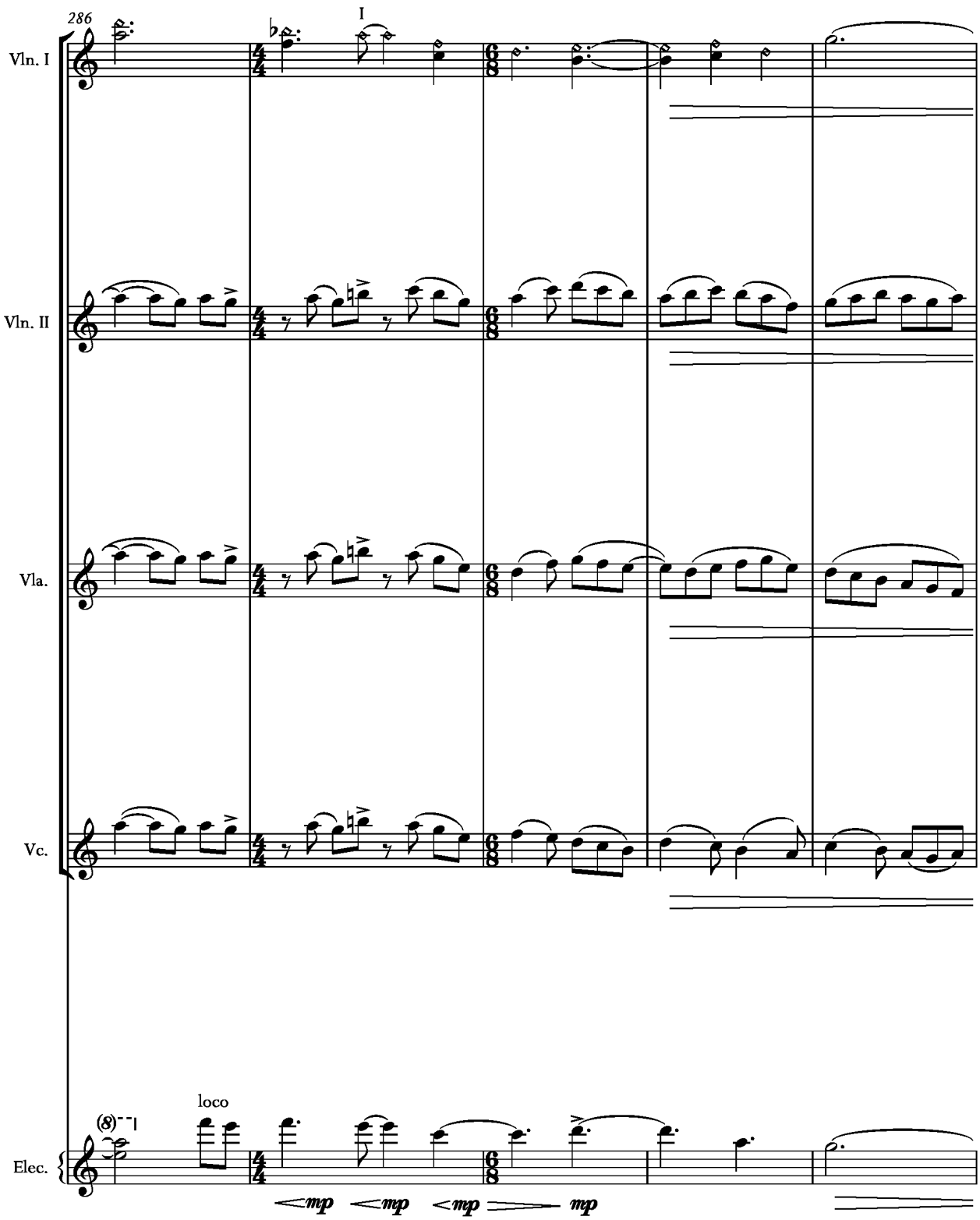

21
22
H
(11:37)
252
Vln. I
mp
Vln. II
mp
arco
Vla.
mp
mf
Vc.
mf
21
22
H
(11:37)
Caw/Coo
Elec.
mf
Tom-tom
mf
(8)

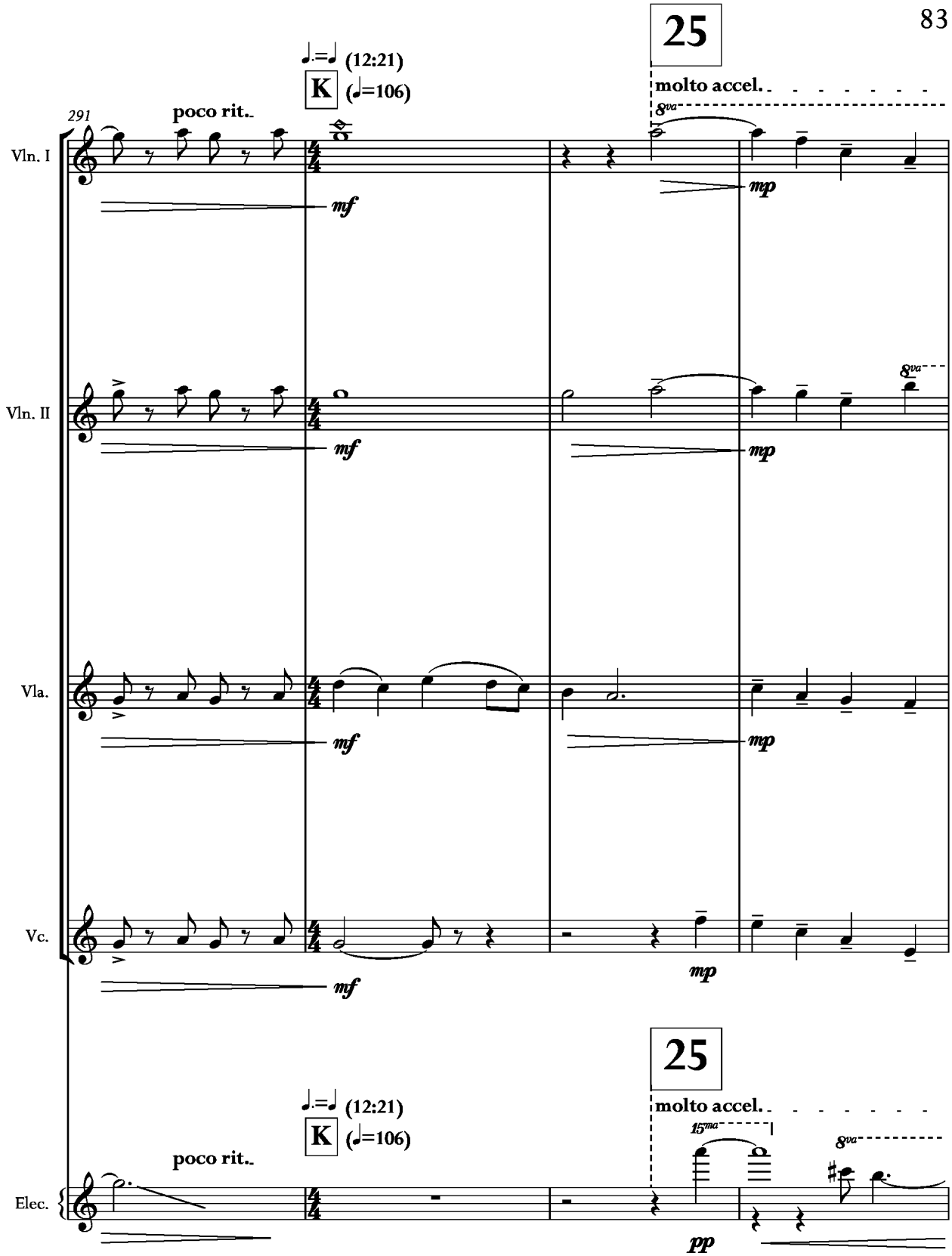

257
Vln. I
mf
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Caw/Coo
Woodpecker
Caw/Coo
Hydraulic Press/Breath
Elec.
p
mp
sfp

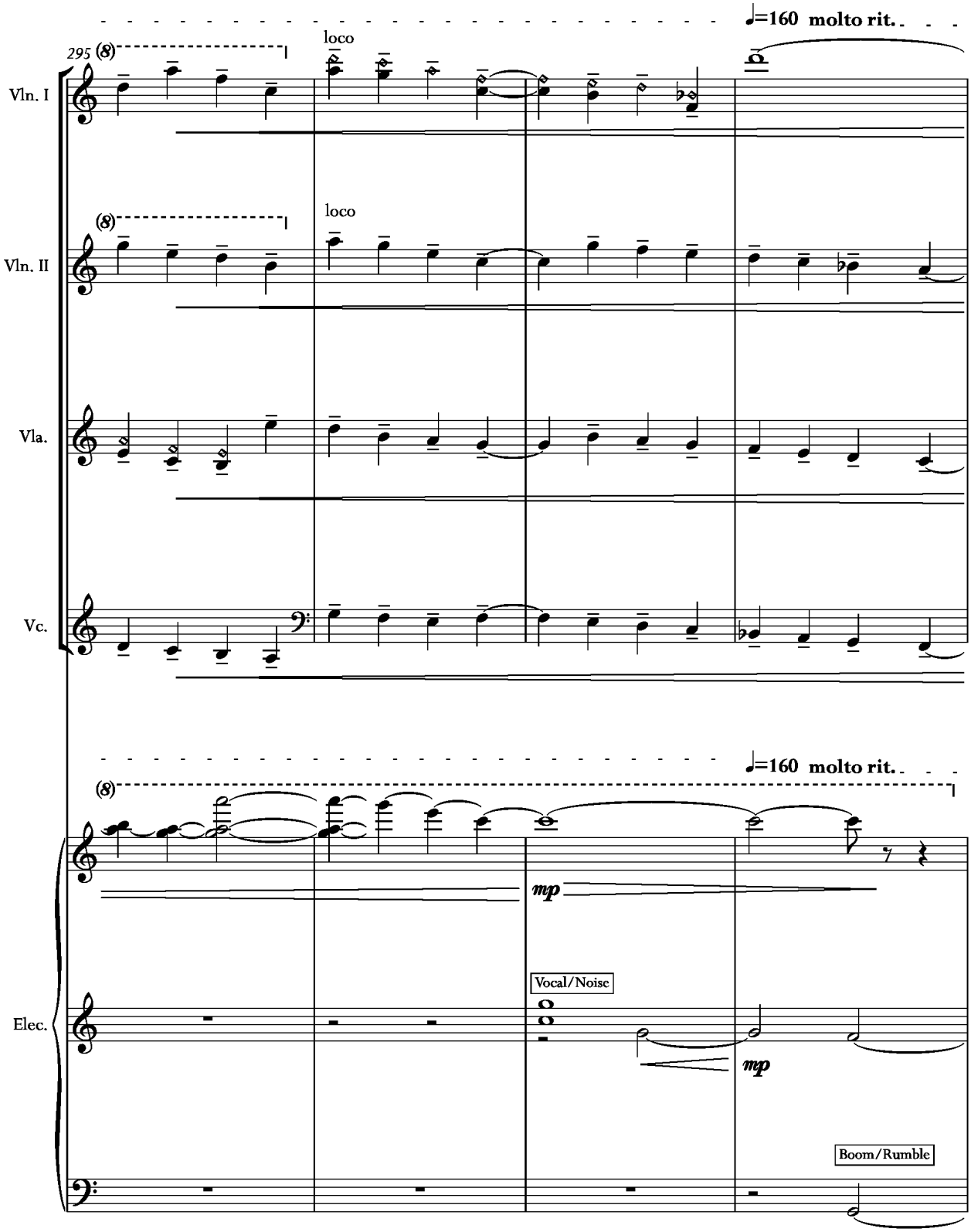

I (11:45)
Cheerfully
261
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
arco
arco
I (11:45)
Cheerfully
Sizzle/Air/Metallic Ringing
Elec.
267

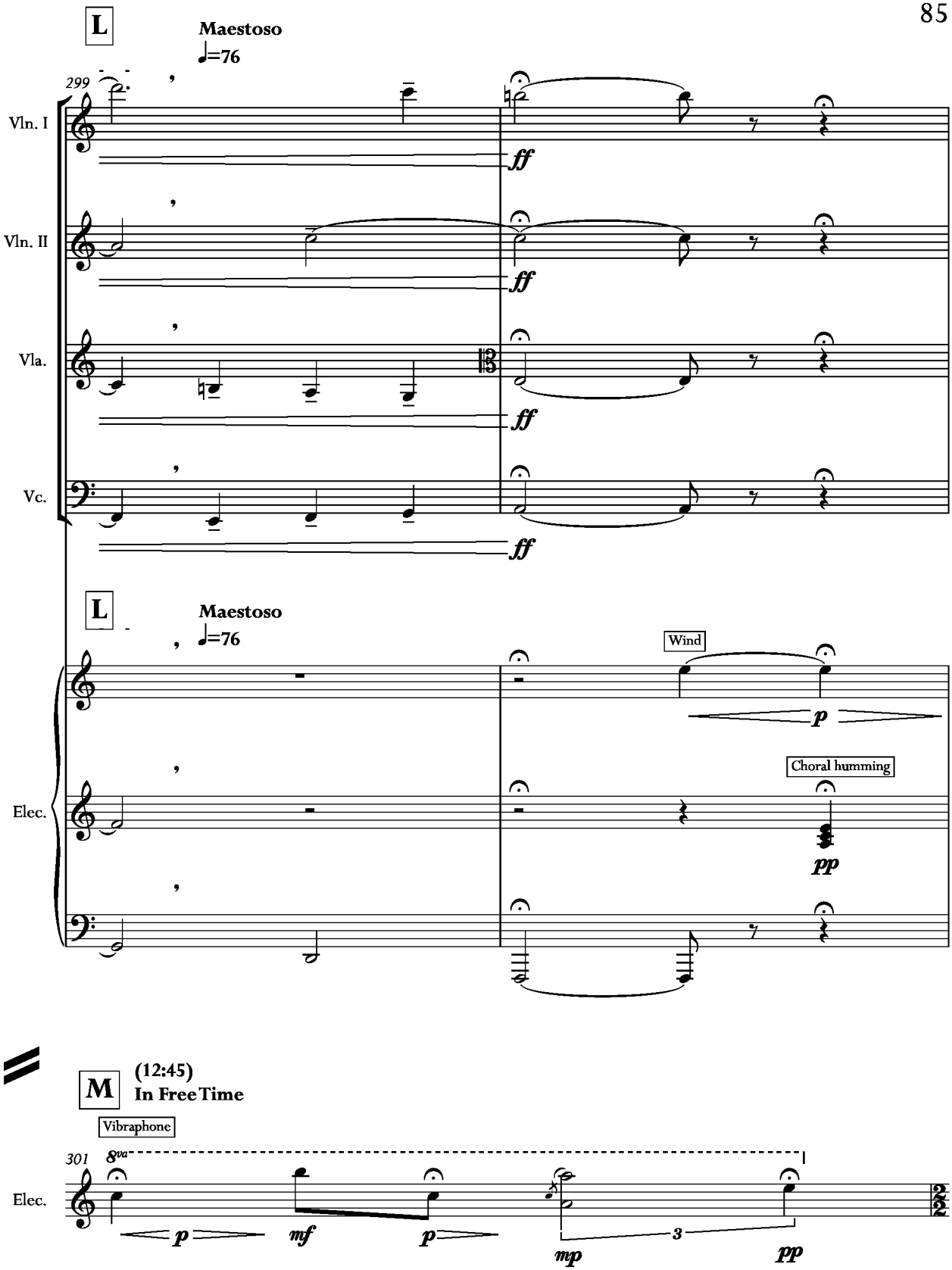

23
(8)
273
loco
Vln. I
mf
Vln. II
mf
Vla.
mf
Vc.
mf
23
Cymbal/Noise
8va
Elec.
pp
mp

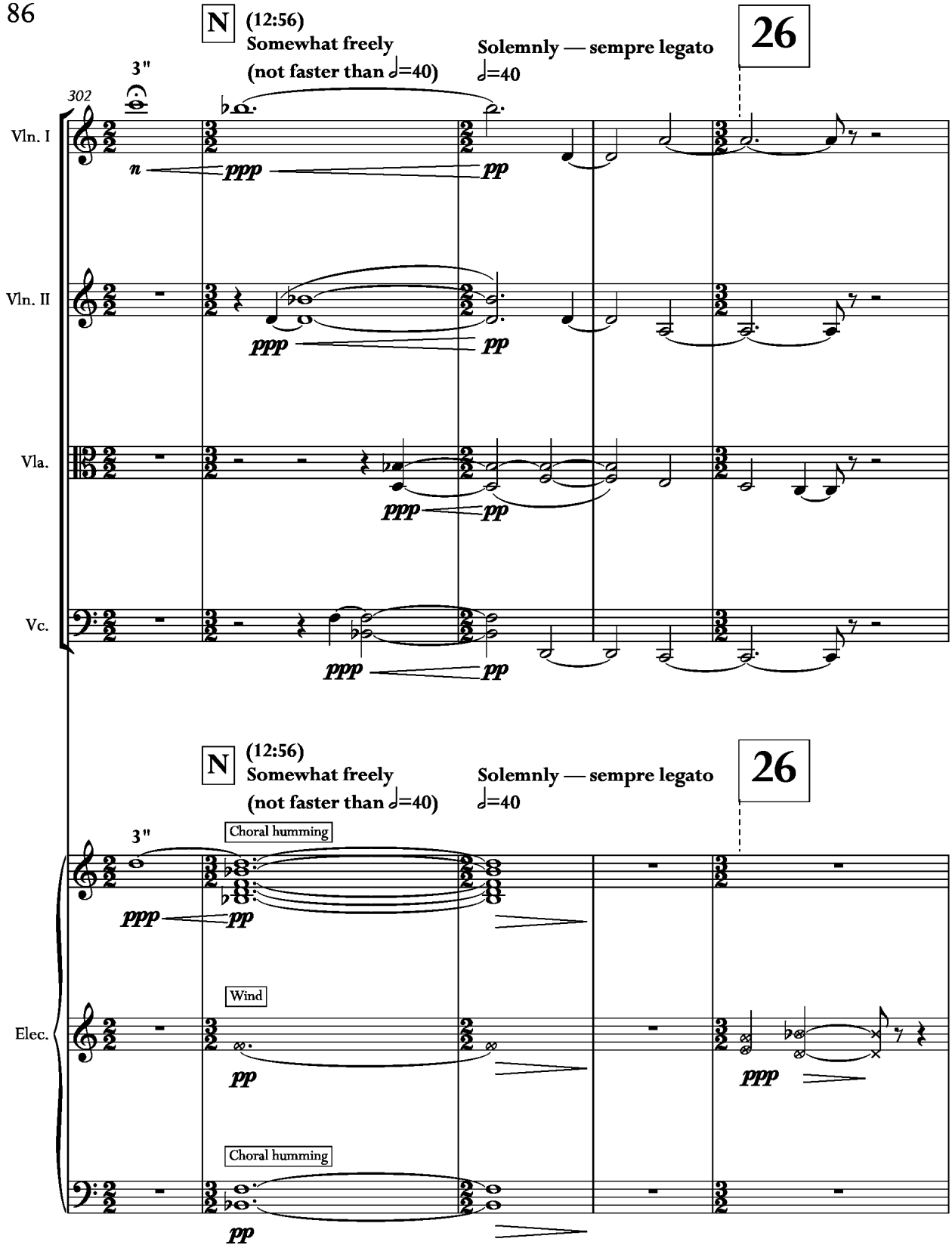

24
J (12:06)
Sweetly
279
II sempre
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
>mp
mp
f
24
J (12:06)
Sweetly
loco
Elec.
8va
mp

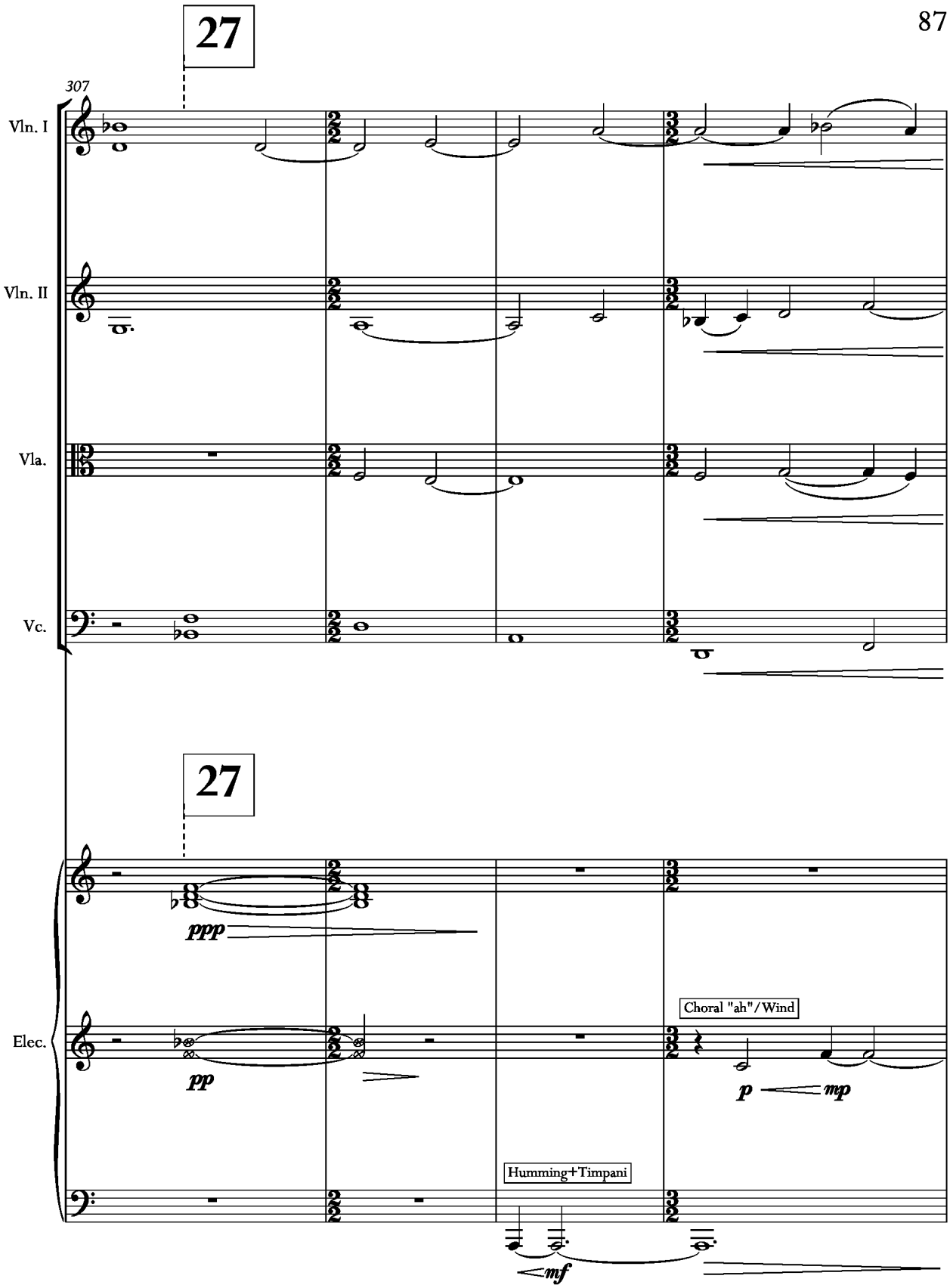

286
I
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
loco
Elec.
mp
mp
mp
mp

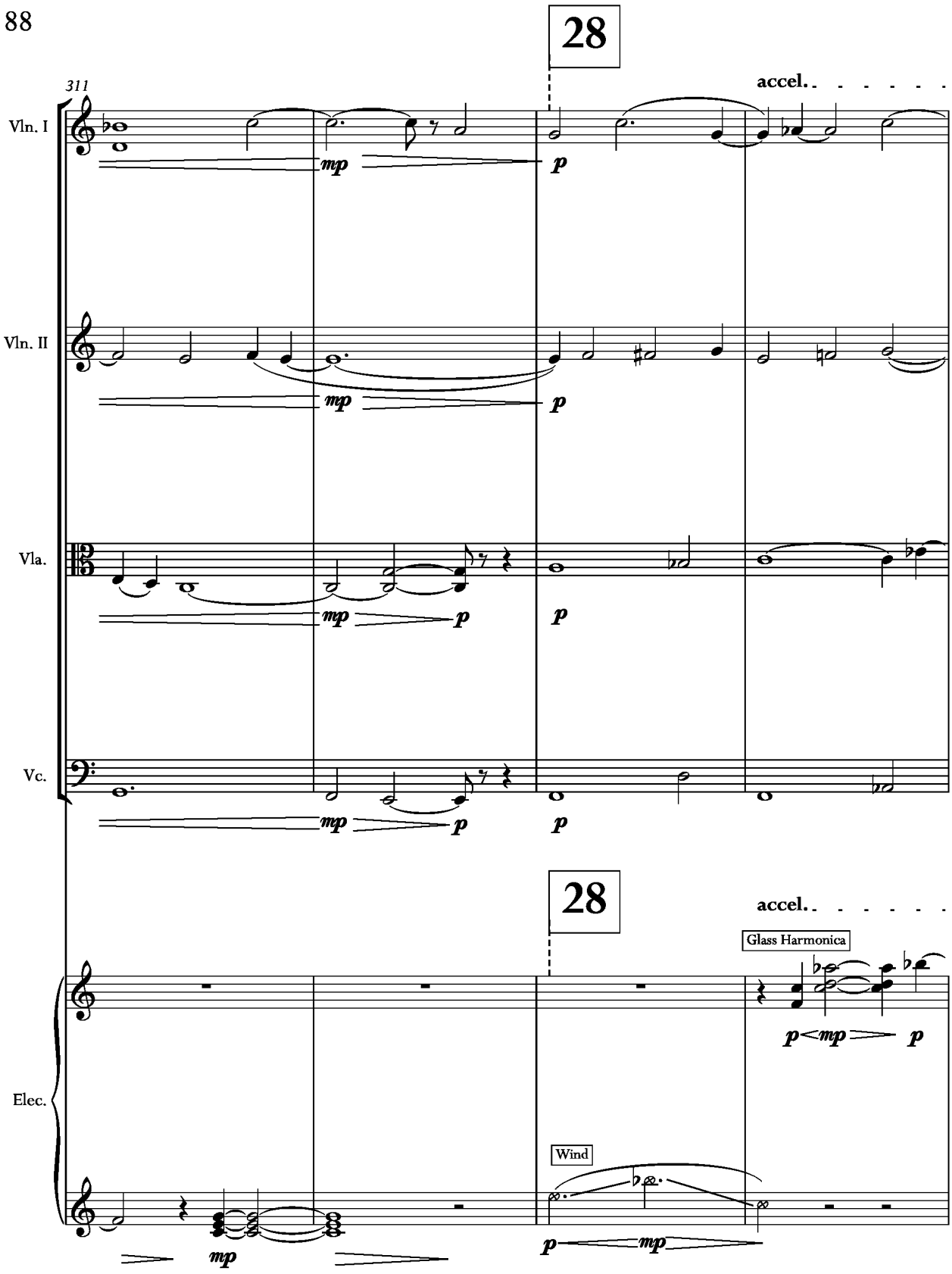

25
molto accel.
♩.=♩ (12:21)
K
(♩=106)
poco rit..
291
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Elec.
mf
mp
pp
8va
15ma

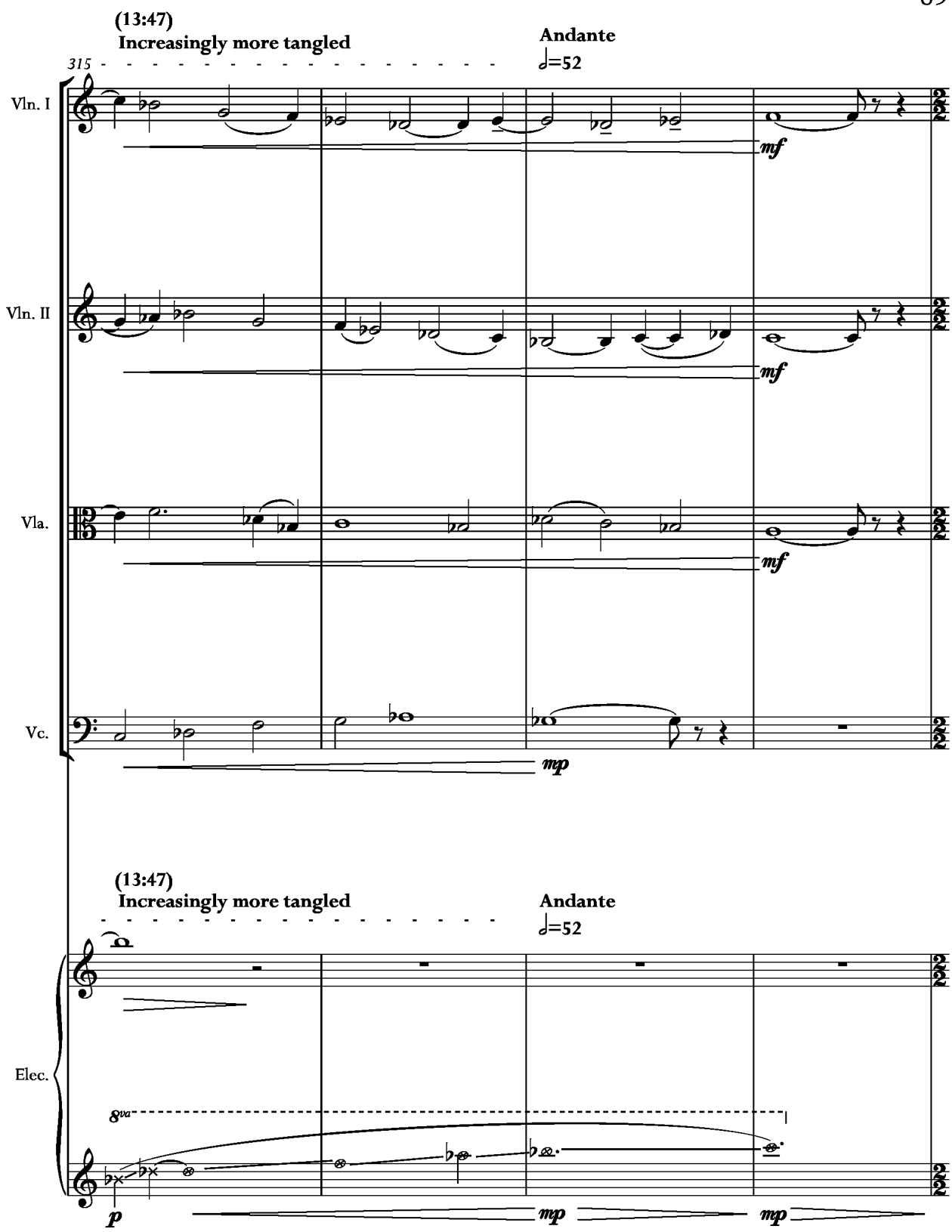

295
(8)
loco
♩=160 molto rit.
Vln. I
(8)
loco
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
♩=160 molto rit.
(8)
mp
Vocal/Noise
Elec.
mp
Boom/Rumble

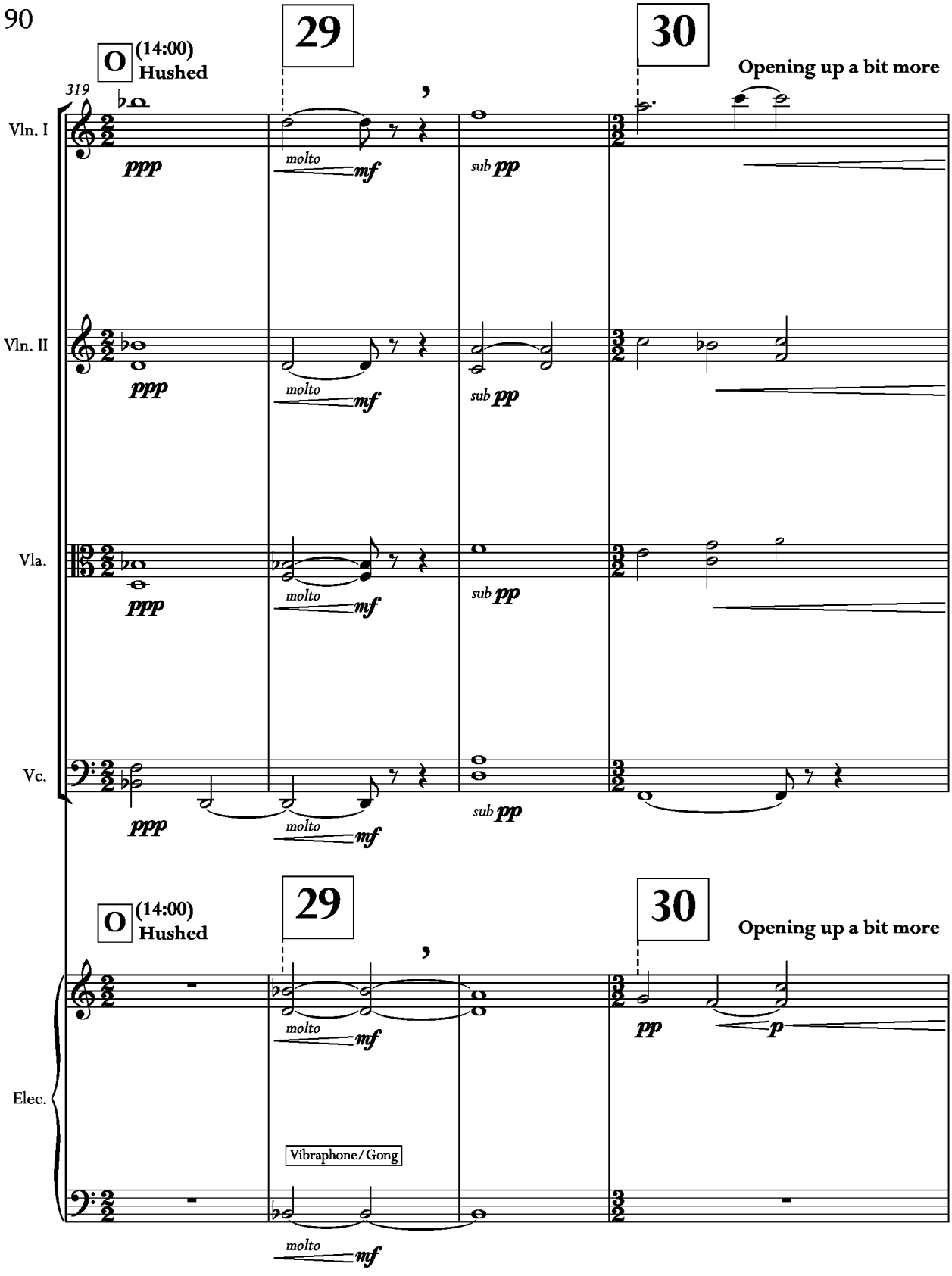

L
Maestoso
♩=76
299
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
ff
L
Maestoso
♩=76
Wind
p
Choral humming
pp
Elec.
M
(12:45)
In Free Time
Vibraphone
301
8va
Elec.
p
mf
p
mp
3
pp

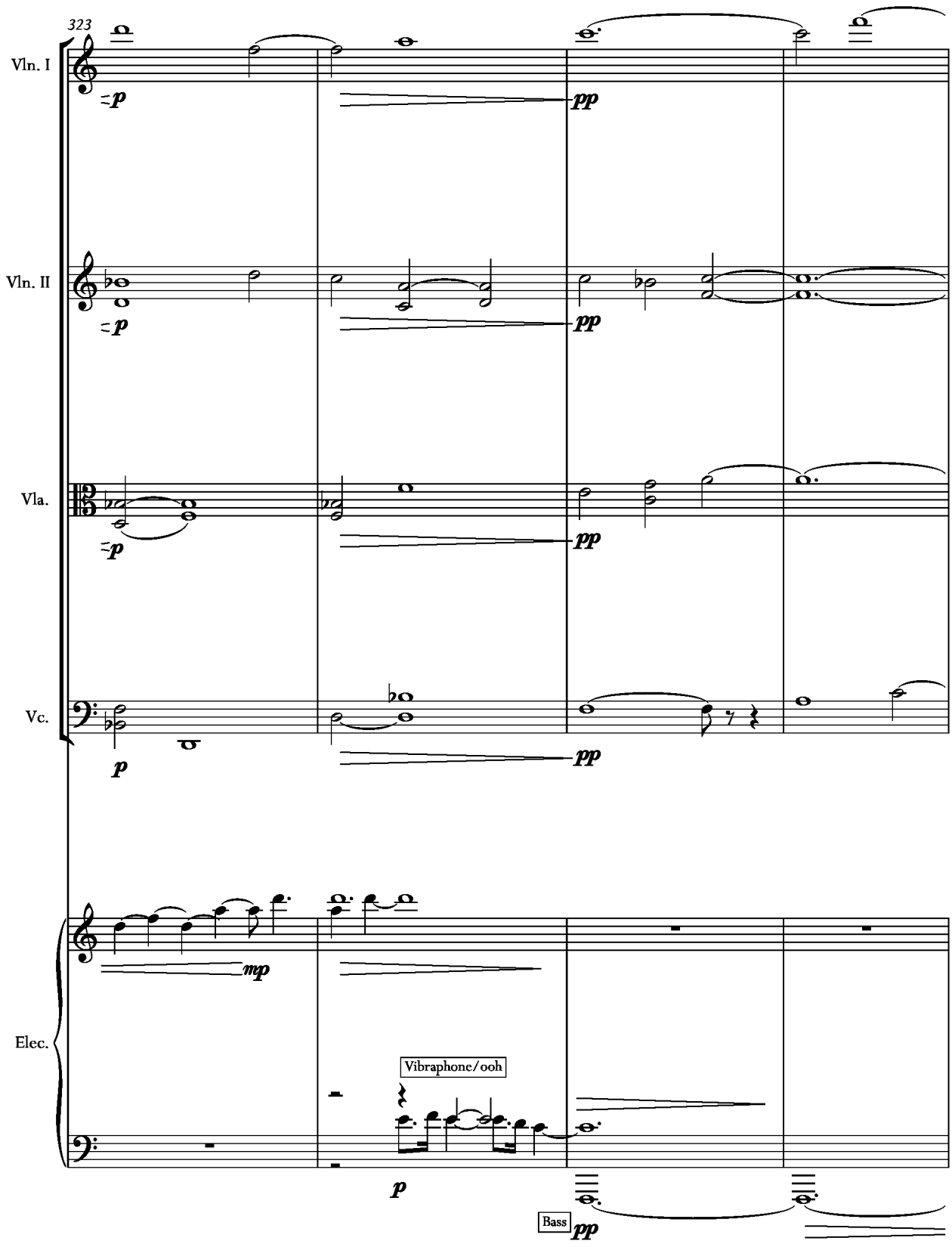

N
(12:56)
Somewhat freely
(not faster than 𝅗𝅥=40)
Solemnly — sempre legato
𝅗𝅥=40
26
3"
302
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Elec.
Choral humming
Wind
Choral humming
ppp
pp

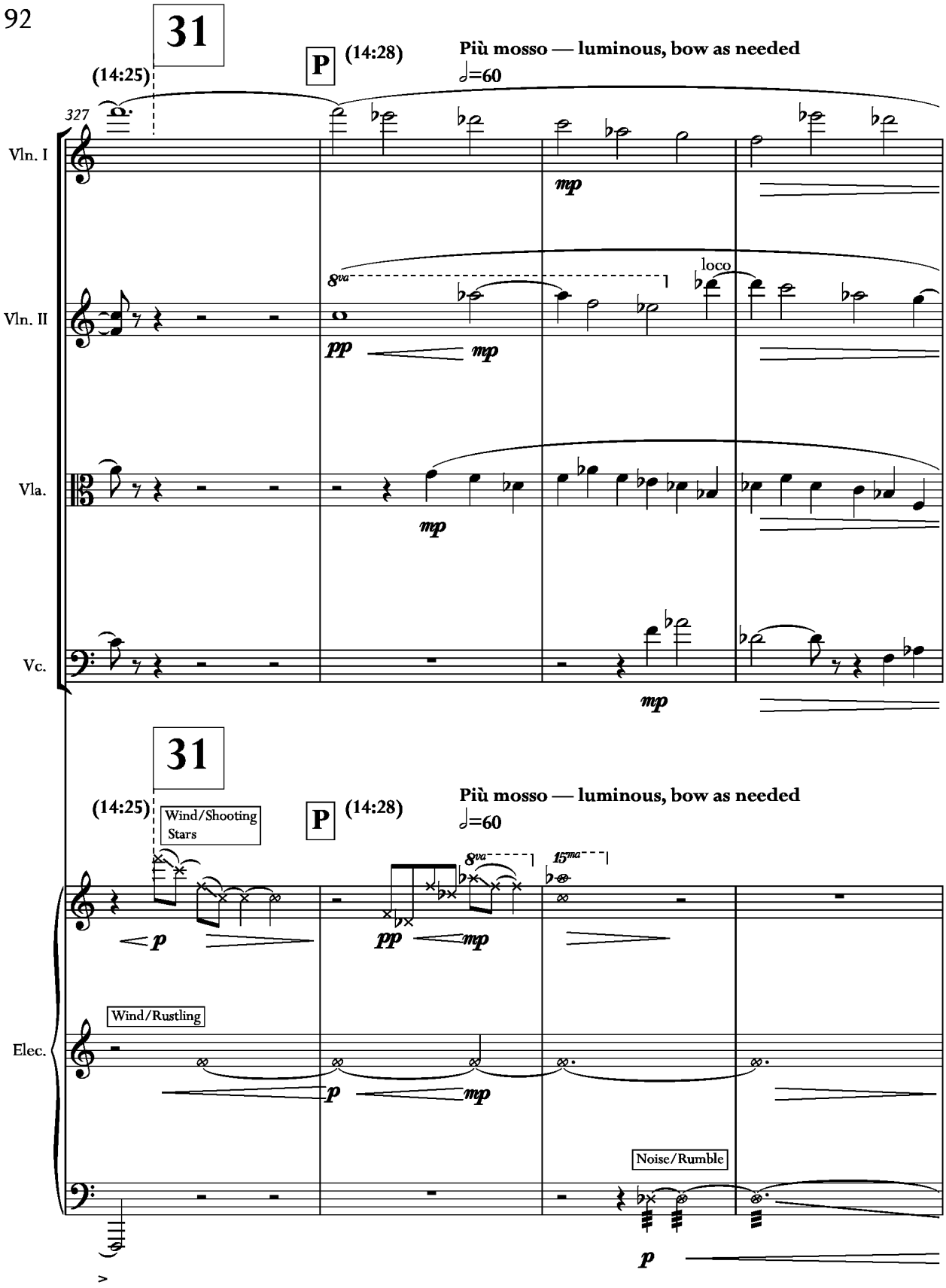

27
307
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
27
Elec.
ppp
pp
Choral "ah"/Wind
p
mp
Humming+Timpani
mf

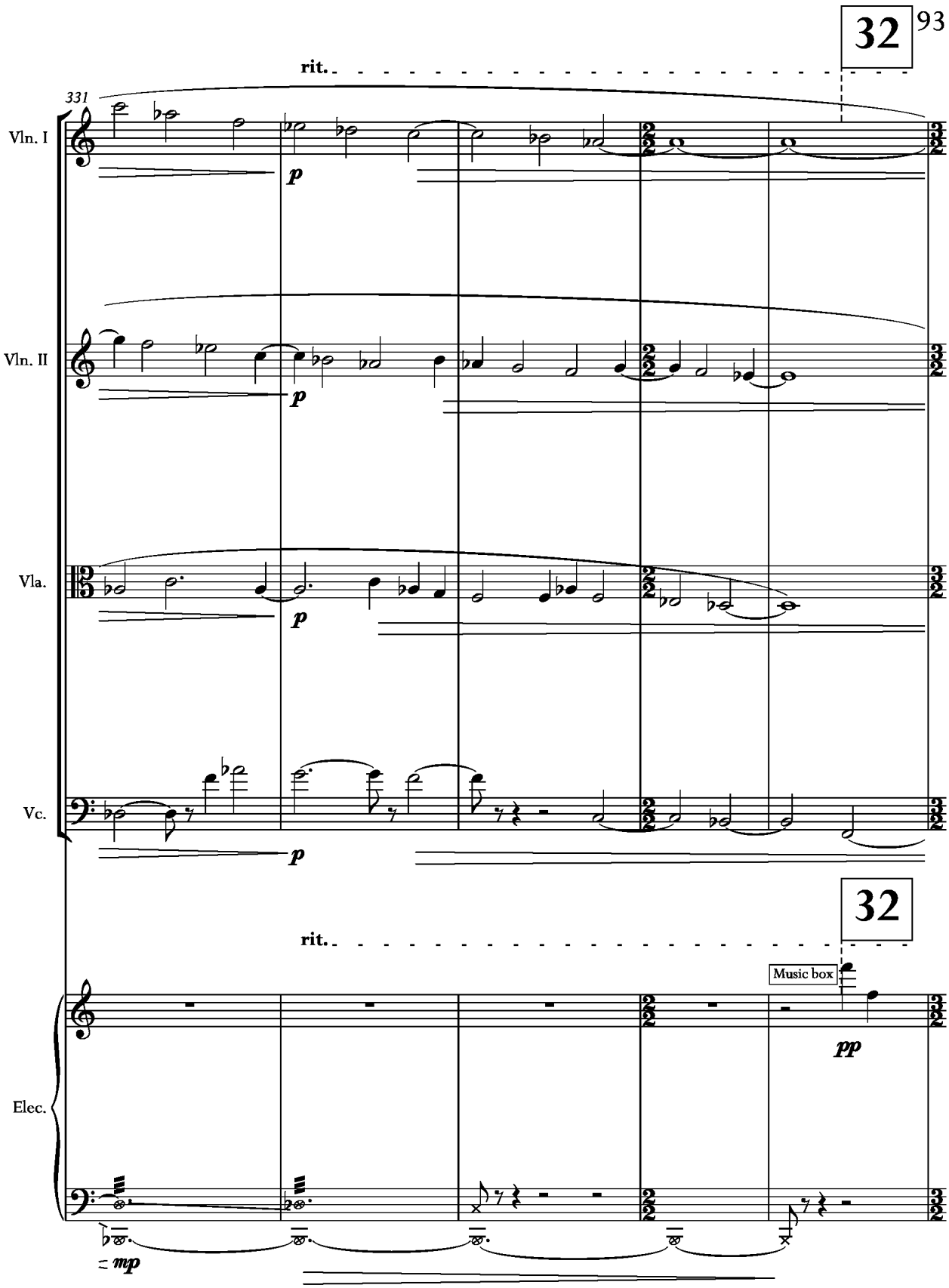

28
311
accel.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
28
accel.
Glass Harmonica
Elec.
Wind

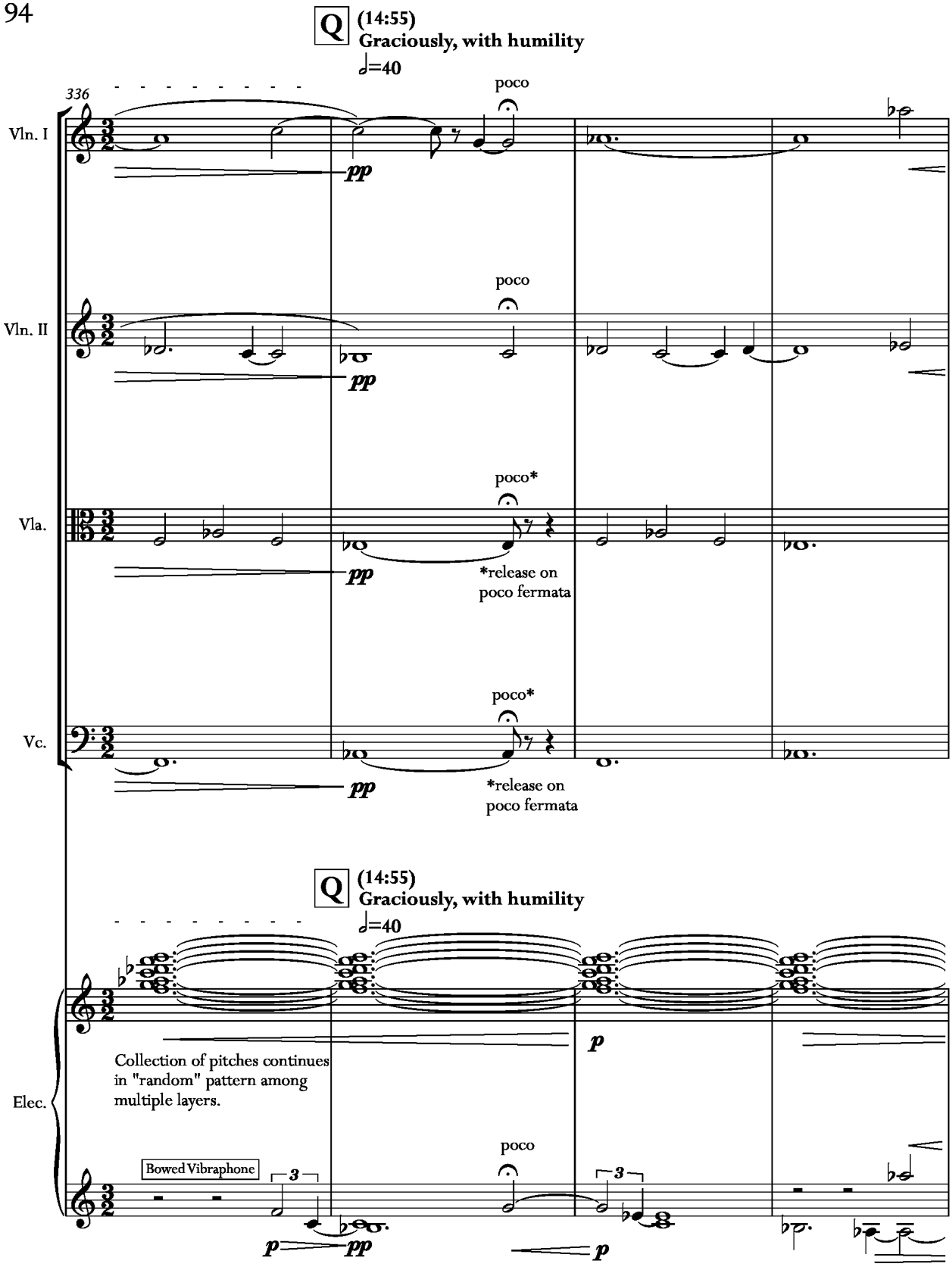

(13:47)
Increasingly more tangled
Andante
♩=52
315
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
mf
mf
mf
mp
(13:47)
Increasingly more tangled
Andante
♩=52
Elec.
8va
p
mp
mp

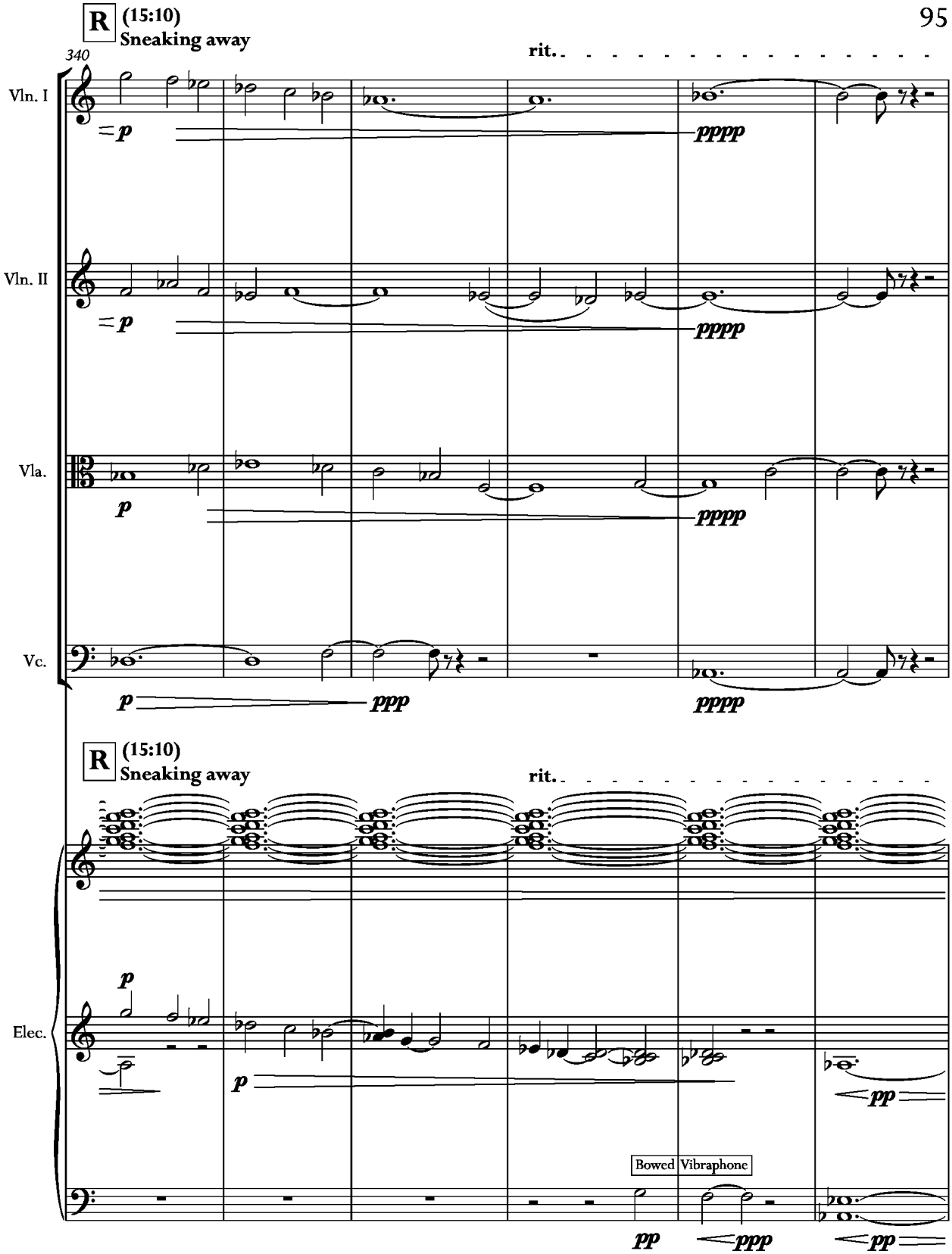

29
30
O (14:00) Hushed
Opening up a bit more
319
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Elec.
ppp
molto
mf
sub pp
pp
p
Vibraphone/Gong

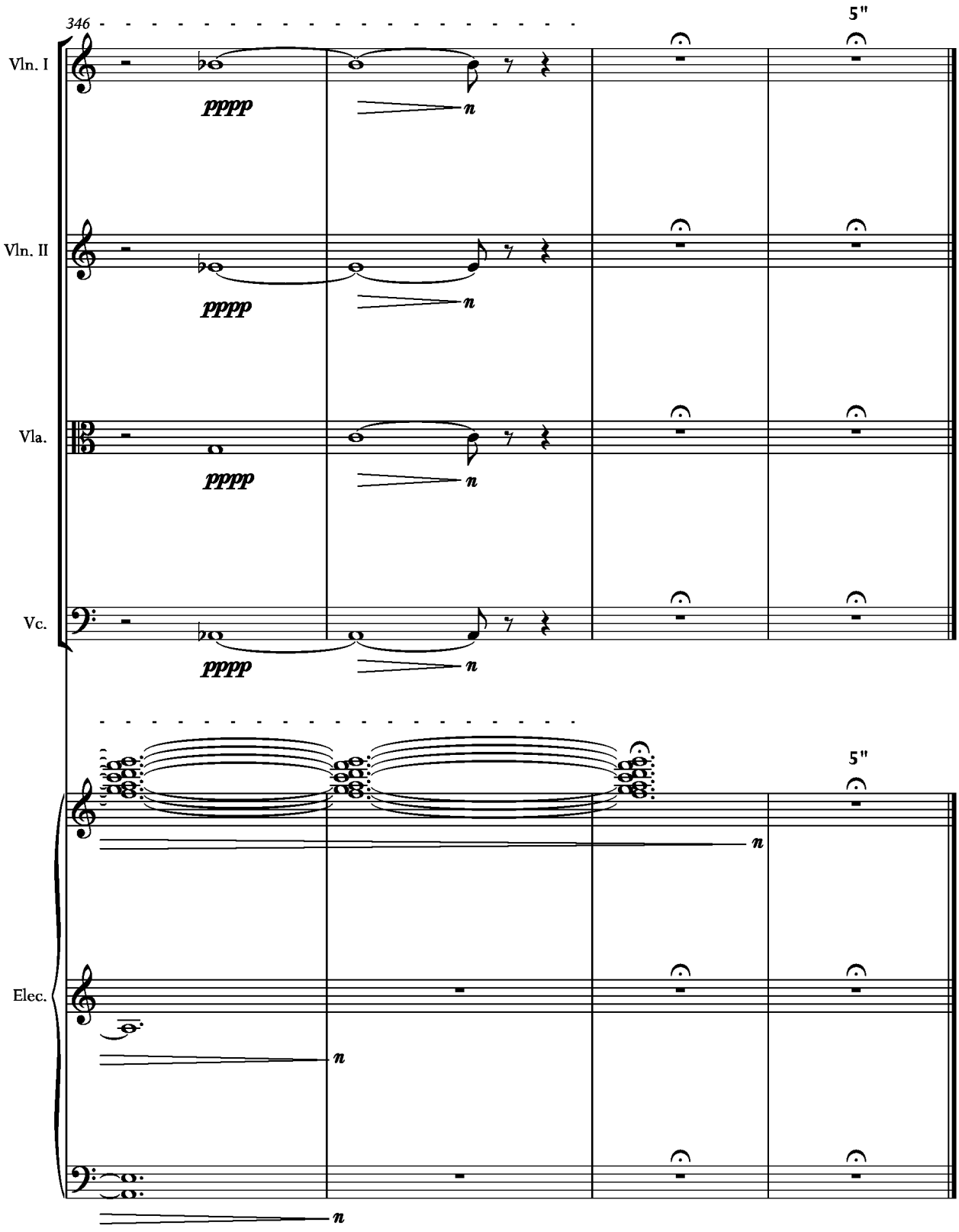

323
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Elec.
Vibraphone/ooh
Bass


31
(14:25)
P
(14:28)
Più mosso — luminous, bow as needed
♩=60
327
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
8va
loco
pp
mp
31
(14:25)
Wind/Shooting Stars
P
(14:28)
Più mosso — luminous, bow as needed
♩=60
8va
15ma
Elec.
Wind/Rustling
Noise/Rumble
p


32
rit.
331
Vln. I
p
Vln. II
p
Vla.
p
Vc.
p
32
rit.
Music box
pp
Elec.
mp


Q
(14:55)
Graciously, with humility
♩=40
336
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Elec.
poco
pp
poco*
*release on
poco fermata
Collection of pitches continues
in "random" pattern among
multiple layers.
Bowed Vibraphone
3
p


R (15:10)
Sneaking away
340
rit.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Elec.
Bowed Vibraphone


346
5"
Vln. I
pppp
n
Vln. II
pppp
n
Vla.
pppp
n
Vc.
pppp
n
5"
n
Elec.
n
n

Tree of Life.mp3

MIDI string quartet and electronics